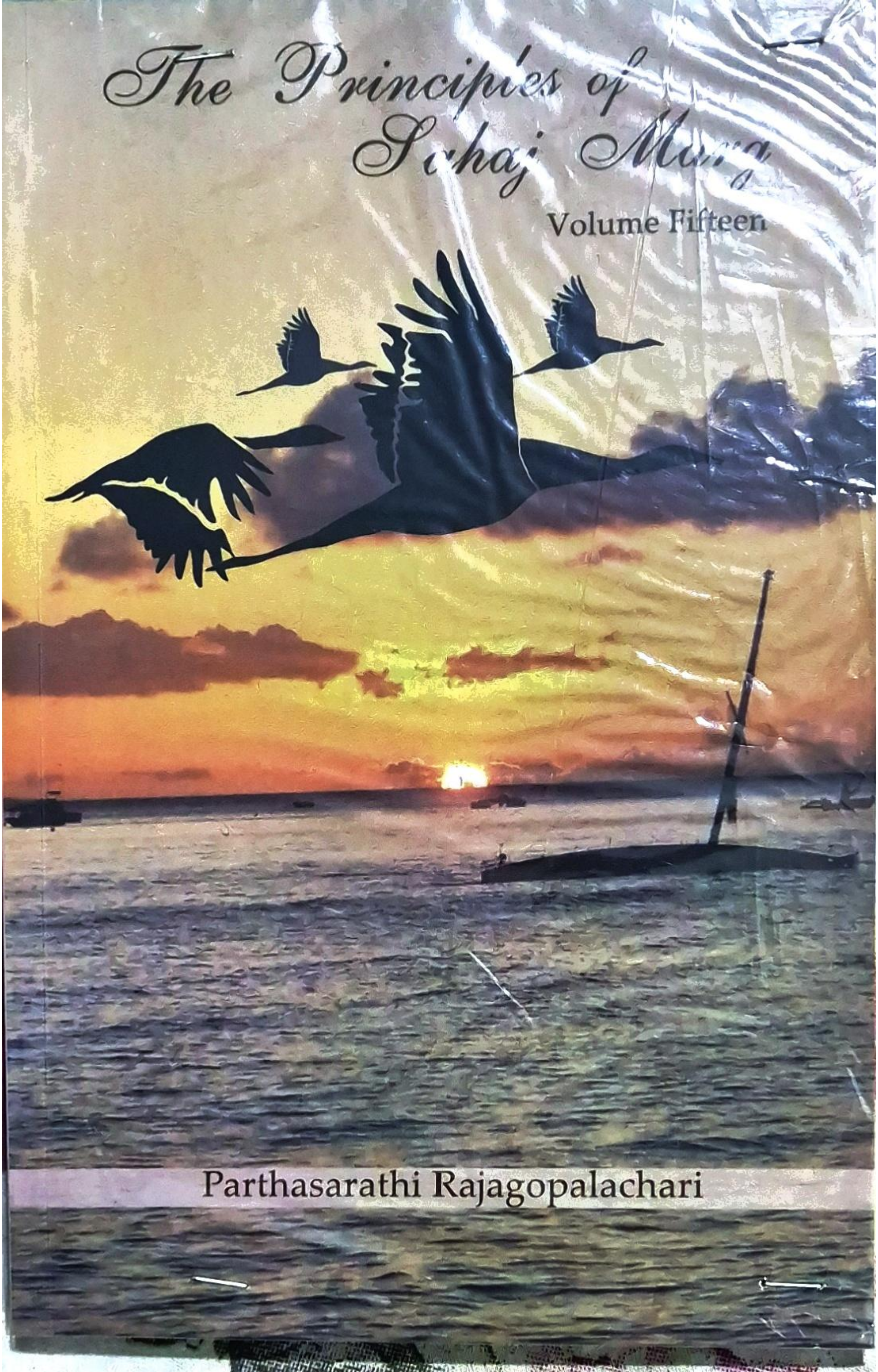
The Principles of Sahaj Marg

Volume Fifteen



Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari

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Volume Fifteen

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SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION
Manapakkam, Chennai – 600 125, India

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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present the fifteenth volume in the series *Principles of Sahaj Marg*. This volume contains talks given by Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari in various centres in India during the period from January to April 1992.

These talks are a call for us to 'Awake, Arise' and develop a correct understanding of spirituality, and of Sahaj Marg as a way of life. Chariji challenges us to examine carefully how we make use of Sahaj Marg – are we using it properly, or are we treating it as a religion, or even a place where we rid ourselves of all that we do not want in life? He asks us to develop noble minds and to see family life as the training ground for spirituality. In his talk 'Where is God?', he examines the degradation that has crept into the human understanding of God and exhorts us to return to a natural approach. He encourages us to dive deep in our spiritual pursuit, to be truthful, to develop faith in ourselves through faith in the Master and to open our hearts.

Chariji reminds us of the importance of sound leadership in organisations. He promotes brotherhood, unity and teamwork, using examples from nature to guide us. In the talk entitled 'Become Conduits of the Divine', he calls for prefects to fulfil their moral responsibility while serving, and to develop the capacity to speak to others about Sahaj Marg in the most natural, simple and heartfelt way.

These talks reflect Chariji's well known ability to communicate profound spiritual philosophy in an accessible way to people of all ages, cultures and walks of life. Traditional Indian stories and personal anecdotes are woven throughout, bringing subtle concepts to life while providing a source of guidance to spiritual seekers around the world.

1

Develop Noble Minds

This is the book that is available. I am a little disappointed that it has been priced very low – only twenty rupees a copy. And I thought in Sahaj Marg we had got over these hang-ups: ten rupees, five rupees, six rupees. So, small thinking – small thinking shows small minds; small minds show small souls; small souls means sub-human. Therefore I am a little disappointed. Though I am very happy with the book, I am disappointed with the price. We should be bold. I am going to speak in English because a large section of the audience here has begun to yawn!

It is necessary that in our thinking, we should think big. One of the gods in one of the temples in South India is called Brihadishwaran. Now, *Ishwaran* [God] is supposed to be very big, but this is a *big* god! You see, God is very big, but big God must be bigger – Brihadishwara Mahadeva. We should first

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15 January 1992, Madras, India

of all give up this small-mindedness. How to give up small-mindedness? Don't think! These are the Master's words, printed lovingly on paper, spoken lovingly by him, written with great effort by him.

You have heard from brother Ramakrishnan today that my Master was not very highly educated. Yes, but he was surely an intellectual because one who could write such a book must have been a great man. It is not great men who write great books. People become great by undertaking great tasks. Like a weak man can become a strong man by doing exercise repeatedly, again and again. It is not strong men who do exercise. It is not healthy men who become doctors. It is the sick man who becomes healthy. It is the weak man who becomes strong. It is the poor man who becomes rich. It is the soulless fellow who becomes a person of the soul and subsequently graduates into the divine realm which we call spiritual.

When we start with small minds, we think small; we attempt even less than what we think; we achieve even less than what we attempt. Those of you who have gone for shooting classes, whether in archery or in target practice with guns, you know that the trajectory is very important. Raise your sights. If you just look at the bull's eye and shoot, you will not shoot it. You will have to raise a little, and the farther the target, the higher the trajectory. I mean, this is a well known law of science. If you want to get eighty percent in your school, aim at a hundred.

But where it is spirituality, people say, "No, no, sir. I am happy with two sittings a week. I am happy with one sitting. Previously I had no sittings at all; now one sitting a week. How much effort I am making!" So, when Ramakrishnan said that even today he has not had a sitting like that, I was not disappointed; I was shocked. And Ramakrishnan is not the isolated example of such a state of existence. I believe most of us are liars. Why Babuji asks the question, "How was the sitting today?" was precisely because he knew the man would not answer. He did not have the courage to answer. And why he did not ask when we had something to answer was because he knew what he had given.

We are always parading our ignorance, parading our foolishness, parading our lies. Here also we are small-minded. A man who has received nothing must be able to tell the Master, "To hell with you and your system! I didn't get anything." A Master is not one who claims he's a Master; he must be able to give. If a bank has no money, it is no more a bank. If a shop has nothing to sell, it is no more a shop. If a vessel has nothing in it, there is no more milk in it, there is no more poison in it, nothing in it.... So we have to learn to be truthful to ourselves. "What did you feel in today's sitting?" "Nothing!" Nobody is going to blame you. "What did you find today?" "Everything." But we are afraid to say because then we think the old fellow might stop transmitting to us. "Oh, he has got everything. It is enough." So don't bring small minds to spirituality. We need people who are not going to pick up stones but who are willing to pick up the whole world and be Hercules. Why only one Hercules in the history of humanity? And that blighter {Atlas} is still shown standing there with the globe on his shoulders. Why only one? Why not ten, why not a hundred? Why not a million? Why not people here saying, "Where is the next world for me to carry?" We are all bleating like sheep, walking like what they call zombies, not alive, not here – even those who make a lot of money.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to talk to two multimillionaires from Assam. They have been here for over a month and they come to me six hours before they are going to leave Madras to go back home. I asked them, "How long are you going to stay?" They said, "Till this evening." I said, "You've just come and you are leaving?" They said, "No, no, we have been here for some time." I said, "How long?" They were not willing to answer. They said, "We came here for treatment." I said, "How long has your treatment been going on?" Because I don't give up easily, you see. "One month." "And you are just coming here today?" "No, no, we were busy – medical tests." "Medical tests? How long? How many tests? Every day, twenty-four hours?" No answer. "Can you not postpone two days? We are having a celebration." "No, no, my business has been suffering without me for one month." I said, "Instead of thirty days, thirty-two days if it suffers will you be a pauper?" No answer. I said, "Can you tell me why a man with a hundred million rupees wants to make two hundred million rupees?" No answer.

I said, "How much do you spend? Thousand rupees a day?" "No." "How much?" "Hundred rupees." "All right, if you have ten million rupees in the bank and you spend a thousand rupees a day, will you ever be able to exhaust that hundred million rupees?" Not at all. On the contrary, it will go on increasing, because interest will be adding and you are spending less than.... I mean this is like the simple sum in school we learn of an empty tank, where the delivery is at the rate of five gallons a minute and the outflow is at the rate of one gallon a minute. It will be filling up at the rate of four gallons a minute. They *cannot* exhaust their money under any circumstance. Still they are going on making money!

We have scholars going on reading books. "What are you doing?" "Research." "Research into what?" "How research is to be conducted." Brilliant answer given to someone they think is a fool. Now who is the fool, who is the wise man, let them determine. Scholars – equally crazy with their learning. Moneyed people – crazy with their money. Physical culturists – eight hours, ten hours in the gymnasium lifting barbells, dumbbells. Sometimes I tell them, "You are using dumbbells so much that you will be a dumbbell yourself very soon!" But they don't appreciate such jokes. They think I am being flippant about something about which I should be very serious. But they don't know that I'm being very serious about something which they think is flippant. So you see, we must remember Babuji's message, "You can swim on the surface of the ocean millions of miles, literally go round and round and round and round and not find anything except junk, flotsam and jetsam, which only the seagulls want – offal. If you want pearls, dive deep."

Now, this is more relevant than anything to our sittings, because people here, they are only swimming on the surface, and they say, "Thoughts are coming." How can thoughts 'come'? From where? Today I have been, in a gentlemanly way, accused of being inconsistent. I remember what one of my – what should I say? – famous South Indians said – C. Rajagopalachari – he said, "Consistency is the virtue of fools." They are afraid of being inconsistent. It is like these animals which go on the same way day in and day out – even the great lions in the jungle, the elephants, so that a wily hunter knows which way they are going, waits and shoots them down. *Consistency is death.* What is consistency? "No, no, there can be only one truth!" Who said so? Have you known even that one truth yet? What is the one truth that I must know? As Babuji said, "There are no truths as such; there are only values valid for your stage in life."

You tell the child, "Don't touch fire," it's good – good advice. But if you tell a man working in an iron foundry, "The furnace is very strong. It's going to be very hot," and his mother comes and says, "David, David, please don't go near that. I've been telling you from your childhood not to go near fire," he says, "Mummy, for heaven's sake, go back home. This is my *job*." Another mother tells her child, "Don't go near water," but that boy ends up as a diver. Another one says, "Don't jump up and down in the air." He becomes an aviator, perhaps an astronaut. Where one truth ends and another truth begins, we don't know. So people only with small minds, narrow minds, unthinking minds, stupid minds, fearful minds, they hold on to one truth. The bold ones find more truths in life until they find that everything is a truth. Like when you kill a man, it is a truth of existence. You give birth to a child, it is another truth of existence. Death is a truth of existence. Life is a truth of existence. *Existence* is a truth of existence.

Can you go to God and say, "You damn fool, you are supposed to be love and you are killing these tiny children." I hear this question every day in the West – three year old diabetic child, one and a half year old child with tuberculosis, six month old baby deformed. "No, no, how can God be love, Chari? Look at this." This is a stupidity of the occidental world that they judge God by deformed and sick babies who are produced by *us* – by our culture, by our pollution, by our so-called wonderful standards of living. And we blame God for it. When the child is beautiful, handsome, well-educated, grows up into a beautiful girl, marries a beautiful boy, becomes a millionairess – "*My* daughter! I brought her up. She has her mother's complexion but *my* features. She has her grandmother's eyes but *my* nose. Look how wonderful her nose is." Double standards, lies.

So, we have got to think in the reverse way. If God is love, why is this happening? Somewhere along that chain love has gone, hatred has come; love has gone, lust has come; generosity has gone, selfishness has come; the world has gone, and I have come. That is the right way to think. If God is love, and He must be love because for centuries and millions of years we have been saying it and people have been feeling it, yet today this is our situation – something is wrong with the situation. This situation is created by us; something is wrong with us.

Who has the courage to say it? It is easy to blame God. It is easy to destroy churches, temples, mosques, Buddhist temples. It is easy to burn libraries like the Alexandria library. It is easy to set fire to things and say, "God! Create a new world." New world for what? For people like this? What will that world do? What will those people of that world do? They will make that world another mess. God says, "One mess is enough. When you have learnt to do this world properly, handle it properly, make it into the Garden of Eden which it was, then I shall give you other worlds to play with. Till then, in this muck, in this mire of ignorance, in this filth thou shalt wallow like pigs." This is His message. And He is right!

If you cannot keep your own mug clean, and your pack full and your water bottle filled, how are you going to be a soldier? I know, because once I was in the Territorial Army and we had to go on a route march some forty miles up and down. And many boys had forgotten to fill their water bottles. Six or seven miles out of camp, they were thirsty. Some of us wanted to give them a drink. The Captain said, "Nonsense, stop it." "Sir, but he's thirsty, Captain." He said, "Now he will be thirsty; tomorrow if he goes to war he will be dead. This is the lesson he has to learn. Next time without filling his water bottle he will not venture out on route march." Beautiful rifle, no ammunition in the belt – he will be dead sooner.

So, you see, death teaches. For those who are willing to learn, death is the greatest teacher. Therefore we have the story of Nachiketas going to no other than Yama [the Lord of Death] himself. All the rest were fools. *Rishis* [seers] – what can rishis and *munis* [saints] teach us? How to sit in meditation; how to achieve enormous powers and then go to Lord Narayana in the Ocean of Bliss and beg, "Please come and save us. *Rakshasas* are attacking us, a*suras* are attacking us (demons are attacking us)." I often wonder what they achieved. But this wily little youngster of eight, he goes to Yama himself, the Lord of Death himself, and says, "Give me that knowledge." "What knowledge?" "What is there after death?"

This is the sort of attitude we must have. And his father, the stupid old blighter, is doing *yajna* (a sacrifice) for knowledge, for wealth, giving away all his stupid things, sacrificing all his old cows which cannot yield milk, lame cows which cannot walk. And this boy says, "To whom are you giving me?" Because he is a possession of his father – that's what he thinks. After he has asked this question a few times, the father in his anger says, "I give you to Death." The boy takes it literally and goes to the land of Death. This is the sort of people we need.

And we have here abhyasis – "Sir, I am afraid of death." Okay! So what's wonderful about it? Every fool sitting here is afraid of death. Every fool sitting all over the world is afraid of death. Why are we fools? Because we are afraid of death. When will you stop being afraid of something which is inevitable? Because we have small minds, we think death is the end of us, when we know that death is but the beginning of the future life. This is the foundation that we are laying here. This is to be covered up, like the foundation of this building is not visible any more, but it is bearing up the structure. If the foundation did not exist and was not covered up and you are only showing the foundation off to everybody, year after year.... "What is this?" "This is the foundation of my ashram." "But, Chari, I've been hearing this for fifteen years." "Yes, but, you see, what a beautiful foundation! Isn't it lovely? Stone, bricks, mortar, lovingly made." "Yes, but when are you going to build something on it?" "Oh, but why should I build something on it? Isn't the foundation good enough? Don't you think it is lovely? Look at the proportion." That is what you see in dead cities of the past. Archaeologists uncover them every day. Dig the foundations of the old empires of the past. No more life, no more wealth, no more nothing, but you see the foundations. So, where you see foundations only, that is death; where you see something on those foundations, that is existence – today, now, here.

So, please try to understand these truths. No fear of death. Why? Because the Lord of Death is a merciful agent of the Ultimate. He says, "My son, you cannot bear any more of this life. You have been exposed to too much of bhoga of samskaras. You are weak, you are aged. Your strength to bear is gone. Now your further existence is of no use to you. You must live so long as you can bear these samskaras which you have to undergo, willy-nilly, whether you will or not. When the power to do that is gone, what is the use of your continuing to exist? Let me take you away, come back again, fit, strong, to bear whatever is left." He is giving us a second chance, a third chance, *until* we are able to go to him and say, "Thank you, my dear friend. You have befriended me long enough.

Now the time has come for us to part. Now death and I have no more association. You have done your job for me through eons of time. I do not know how many millions of lives you have taken me out of when I was feeble, when I was weak-minded, when I was strengthless, and put me back into the arena again, rejuvenated."

Like the bell in a boxing ring – round after round the bell rings – one minute round, one and a half minute round, whatever it is. They batter each other, then they sit for thirty seconds or forty seconds. They are swabbed, they are swiped, wiped, given a little strength, a few whispers in the ear, "Bang that fellow in the nose, go for the solar plexus!" And he is out in the ring again, until he's knocked out. There the ending is knock-out. Here the ending is different. Here you come back strong – no more samskaras but now ready to meet face to face the beloved, between yourself and whom there was hanging this heavy curtain of samskara, which one by one in life after life we have been able to get rid of, thanks to death. If there had been no death, this world would be full of old, feeble, useless people, living forever, useless to themselves, useless to others. What is the use of such a life? So, we need strong minds, mighty minds – not to face life. Life any fool lives. Beggars live, prostitutes live, sick people live, people with AIDS live, philosophers live, saints live – who is not living? Ants live, birds live. Any stupid thing in life which has come into life has the ability to face life. We have to develop the ability to face death. Take it as a friend. "Yes, my beloved, I'm coming. You are the messenger."

You remember what Lalaji said when he was dying? "I see around me liberated souls. It is the moment for me to meet my beloved. They are the messengers from the beloved who have come to receive me." This must be the attitude. And when Death says, "Sorry, not yet. Wait!" it is like our waiting room in the doctor's clinic. The nurse comes, smiles sweetly, "Yes, Mr Peterson, this patient is next. Wait." We wait. We have no choice, we have to wait. We smile sweetly and say, "Oh, it is okay, I can wait." Here also we must be able to tell death, "Oh, it is okay. Put me back soon. I don't want to waste time here in between two lives. Get on with the job. If I have to be reborn I must be reborn at once – no hanging around in limbo, wasting time. Quickly here, finish the job, get out."

So, you see, from the pricing of the books to the meeting of our beloved, in the home of the beloved which is also our home, we need noble minds, strong minds, powerful minds, one-pointed minds which are not disturbed by life and which are even less disturbed by death. So, please remember this, gird up thy loins – and stay seated!

Thank you.

2

Message

Dear brothers and sisters,

We are once again assembled to celebrate the most auspicious occasion of the birth anniversary of our *param pujya* {revered} Lalaji Maharaj, the Adi-guru of the Sahaj Marg system of raja yoga. It is a sacred and auspicious occasion when his special blessings pour down upon the assembled devotees who must prepare themselves to receive it in full measure. It is also the annual occasion when we are able to take stock of our spiritual progress and to make a determined effort to reach the goal as soon as we possibly can. My revered Master used to repeat again and again, "Life and death are in God's hands and it is wisdom on our part to complete the journey to the destination in the shortest possible time, for such occasions are rare when humanity has the benefit of the service of the highest souls descending to earth

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Basant Panchami Celebration, 8 February 1992, Hyderabad, India to help a suffering humanity." I earnestly pray that all the devoted abhyasis of the system are able to achieve the purpose for which they have presumably dedicated themselves.

My revered Master had said that there are only three things that an abhyasi can call his own: the Master, the Mission and the method. He has created the Mission and evolved the method after considerable research, basing the method upon the foundation created by revered Lalaji Maharaj and therefore they are one. The Master, the Mission and the method cannot be separated wilfully by anybody. He has said that one must commence the abhyas under the direct guidance of the Guide and the Mission has been structured to fulfil the purpose of serving the needs of the abhyasis who are seriously interested in their spiritual lives.

The Master has given us clear and unambiguous instructions and advice and this we are duty-bound to follow if we wish to reach the highest goal that the Sahaj Marg system has made available to us, and which is our Master's sacred promise to us too. It is fallacious to think that what is essentially one can be broken up into artificial parts and our spiritual allegiance transferred to the part of our choice. There are persons who do devoted service at the various celebrations such as selling books, looking after the kitchen, serving food, clearing the premises and so on. But if they do not meditate regularly and do not develop devotion and eventually love for the Master, then their progress virtually stops. My Master has clarified that while service is no doubt good and necessary too, nevertheless without sadhana, a person cannot really progress in spirituality.

There are cases of persons who do the sadhana with obvious seriousness and with visible regularity too. In most cases there has been lack of progress and my Master has once again been gracious enough to clarify that sadhana without love for the Master has no meaning, and he added in his typically gentle manner, "But I give them some crumbs of spirituality since no one can be permitted to go away with empty hands after coming to me."

There are the cases of abhyasis who are totally devoted and attached to the Mission, but who are careless about their meditation and have no care for the Master. In such cases too they suffer from lack of much progress and the Master's words are there again – one must be devoted to the Master, do his sadhana regularly without modifying the method to suit his own convenience, and also be capable of service to humanity through the Mission that has been established for this very purpose. Otherwise the fruits of labour will not be fully available.

It is therefore obvious that the Master works through the Mission that he has established for that very purpose and uses the method that has been remodelled by him to suit modern living conditions, and it must be obvious to all that to separate the three is an endeavour that will not reward anyone, least of all the one who is trying to split the essential unity into its component parts.

I pray on this auspicious occasion that all the serious seekers of spiritual values, and especially those who are striving to reach the promised goal, do not squander away their lives in the empty pursuit of partial goals. It is not possible for one to stay within the Mission and practise another method, even while accepting the Master. It is not possible for one to accept the Master and practise his method after joining another Mission, or by staying out of the Mission. Nor can one progress by remaining faithful to the Mission and practising the method seriously if he does not accept the Master.

The message on this auspicious occasion is therefore clear to one and all: Make the Master, the Mission and the method yours. Be devoted to the Master. Serve the Mission in whatever way you can. And finally, practise the Sahaj Marg system as given to you by the Master assiduously and faithfully, with regularity, and then see for yourself what the results can be.

May the Divine Master give all aspirants the necessary wisdom and strength of purpose and make this possible to one and all. I pray that He may bless all with His love and grant us progress to the goal.

3

I Must Be Where He Is – Eternally

By the grace of the Master the function is coming to a close. One thing I would like to remark, that often I find that as soon as this morning meditation is over, the *utsav* [celebration] may be over but the spirit of the utsav should not be abandoned. Everybody seems to think that once we get out of this meditation hall on this morning, the concluding day of Basant, this spirit should be recreated only next year again when we meet. I think this is only a carryover of certain traditions in our religion that a particular moment, a particular *muhurta* [auspicious time] is valid; after that it is not a good time.

It came to me during meditation just now that this idea of selecting a muhurta for a good and auspicious deed is probably one of the reasons why we look on the rest of the occasions as bad or not so favourable. There is no such thing as good time and bad time. Time is good when it is usefully used, when

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Concluding Address, Basant Panchami Celebration
9 February 1992, Hyderabad, India

it is well used, when it is used for a good purpose. It is bad when we use it for a bad purpose, negatively, uselessly. Time by itself has no value, no meaning; it depends on us what meaning we give to time, what value we give to time, how valuable it is to us. To one who does not use it, it is useless. It is the same with money. Money can be used in constructive, progressive ways. It can be used destructively, to ourselves, in gambling, drinking and other vices. So it depends upon us what we do with time and how we continue to use that time.

I would submit that one of the aspects of constant remembrance is perhaps this idea of continuing to utilise time to our profit, for our growth, for our continued welfare – spiritually and in all other ways. We have therefore to cut off these funny ideas of good times and bad times, auspicious times and inauspicious times, looking for a good time to do something good. To do a good thing all time is good; to do a bad thing no time is good. It is not necessary to repeat the story which Babuji Maharaj told me about *antim upadesha* [final advice] that Lakshmana received from the dead Ravana.

I repeat, these are vestiges of the Hindu culture that for everything we must look at the *panchaang* [calendar based on Vedic predictions], or consult the *purohit* [priest] or the *jyotish* [astrologer], and find out an auspicious time. Many of these old traditions we have to throw away. That a high soul, supposedly high soul like Bhishma, had to die only in the *uttaraayana* [the sun's transit to the Northern Hemisphere], I think is a fallacy. A good soul, a highly developed soul, can die when it chooses. I think it is an aspect of fear that if he died in *dakshinaayana* [the sun's transit to the Southern Hemisphere] he would not have found his goal. Please don't think I am criticising. They were stories meant for a different epoch, for a different people with different aspirations perhaps. In Sahaj Marg, all these things have no validity.

Everyone is afraid of doing something, precisely because we are afraid of the result. Therefore, to assure the result should be good, we think that the *time* has to play a part in it. But when you think of the modern days, that we can study at night by candlelight or by electric light, perhaps there were days in the past when we could only study in the daytime because there was no illumination available at night. I used to be told that the Vedas should not be recited at night after sunset. Perhaps this was one of the reasons. There is a great deal of stress given in the Vedas to pronunciation, to chanting. Perhaps they were valid in the days when mantras were valid. Today, mantras have no meaning. At least in Sahaj Marg, mantras have no meaning for us. Therefore it is time that we decided to utilise time, every second of it, for our welfare, for our growth, and this can only be done if we look upon all time as good time.

So, even though we are advised to meditate at a particular time, [we still] meditate if that particular time is missed. Often I find abhyasis, they say, "Sir, I could not meditate this morning." "Why?" "Because I got up late." Well, meditate after that. It is better to meditate than not to meditate. Of course, it is best to meditate at the stipulated time. Babuji Maharaj has said, have a particular place and a time. Not because the time is auspicious or any funny thing like that, but because we develop a habit that we go into that place at a particular time and the mood for meditation automatically comes.

So please remember that we *must* meditate whenever we have the time. If you cannot meditate at the stipulated place and time, meditate wherever you are, at whichever time you are in. After all, we eat whenever we can. If I miss the lunchtime, I don't go hungry. If I cannot sleep at night, I sleep by day. If I cannot read the newspaper in the morning, I read it in the afternoon. So the activity must continue. And Babuji Maharaj has said, though we should meditate only one hour at a time, we can meditate as many times as we have to, or need to, or can possibly meditate if we have the time – again and again. So instead of sitting idle, resting in the sun, sitting under the trees reading novels, use that time for meditation. "No, no, I did my morning meditation." Sahaj Marg does not say, "Meditate only once." Meditate as often as you can if you have the time. Once one hour, no more.

So you see all these funny ideas, misunderstandings, good times, bad times, muhurtas... Yesterday I heard the story of a young man who is very disturbed because his astrologer told him that for the next three years there is danger to his life. That is a funny astrologer, because if I was an astrologer, I would say that every moment of our life, there is danger to our life. Which of us can say whether we will be here one hour hence? It is foolish to say that there is only danger during this period or that period. Astrologically speaking, we are always in danger of dying. Who can say when life will end? Because life is such an ephemeral thing, such a tender thing, such a transitory phenomenon: here – gone. So it is crazy, you see. Astrologers should be taught to tell the truth, that you are in danger of dying any moment. Therefore get on with the job of evolution, do what is necessary to be done, for you cannot say when anybody will die. That is the astrological position.

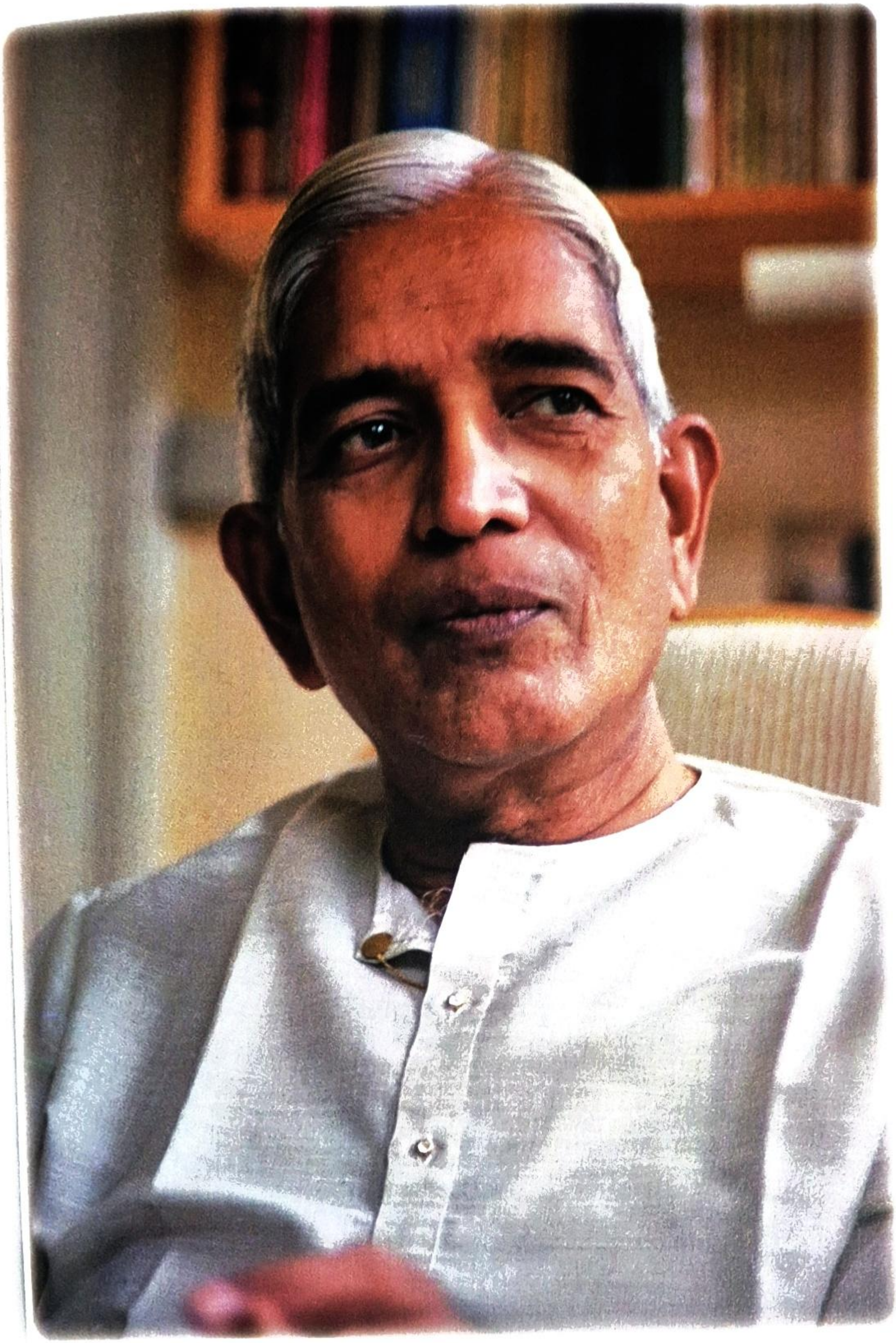
As a spiritual person, what should we seek? That there is no such thing as death. Life is eternal. Our existence in this body may be temporary, transitory, limited by time; not the eternal life that is inside us. So under no circumstances have we any business to depend upon astrology in these things. If you look at it spiritually there is no death. If you look at the body and the life as a temporal phenomenon, then any moment is the moment of death. Therefore, as Babuji said, "Wisdom is to act as if you are going to die the next moment." That is real astrology. That is real spirituality too. So, if at all you must go to a jyotish, you please predict for him, his death! Tell him, "Do you know whether I will be here or not?"

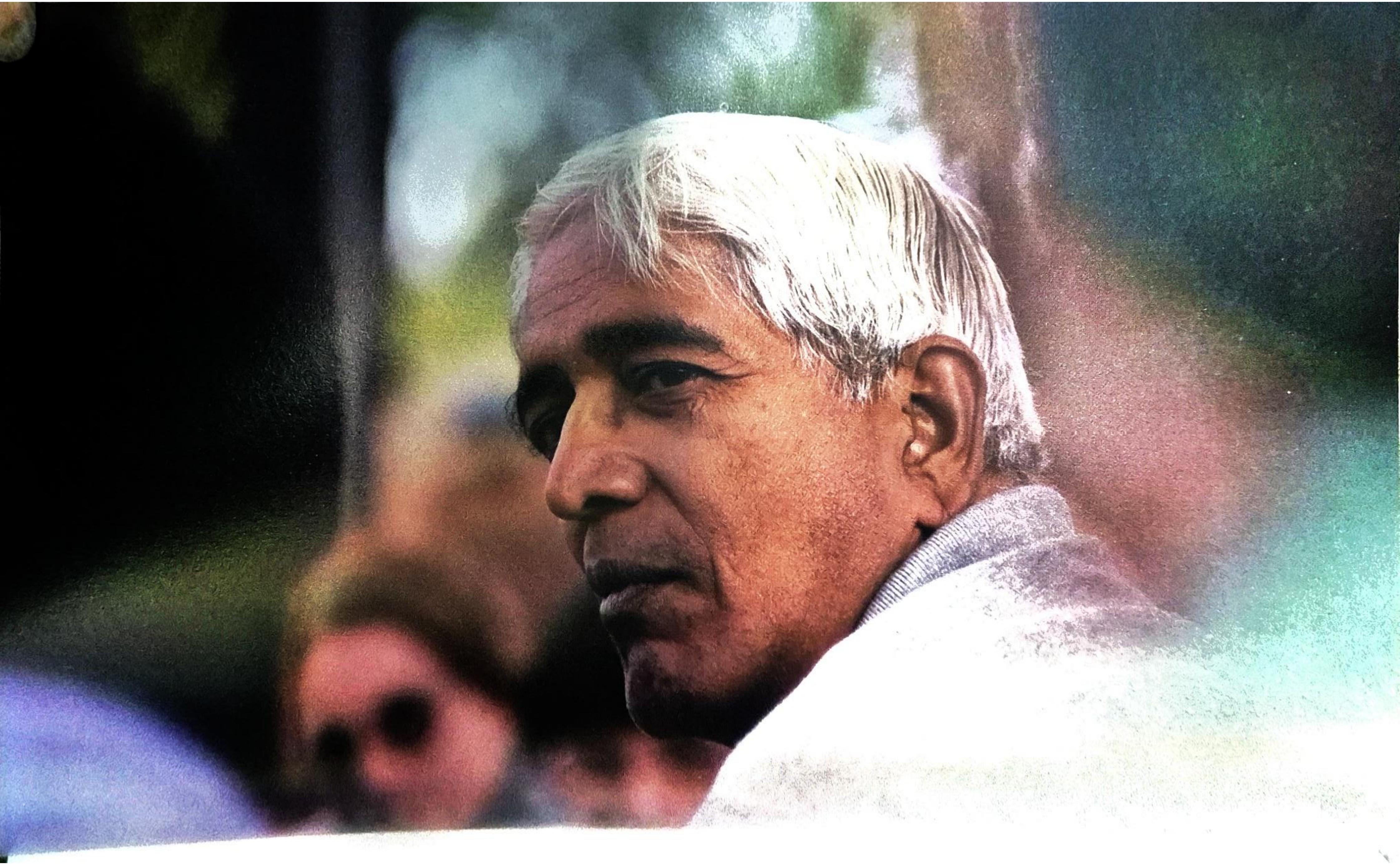
I remember a famous story of an emperor who consulted a jyotish, and the jyotish gave dire forecasts, that "you are going to die at such and such a time." The emperor asked him, "Do you know when you are going to die, Shastriji?" He said, "Oh, I have got thirteen years of life." He said, "No." He pulled out his sword and cut off his head. That was the end of the jyotish. That was a brave man, a young man with guts. So let us not go to these charlatans, rogues, money-makers. And by that I don't mean only jyotishes; I also mean so-called gurus who promise you liberation in three seconds, who say, "*Ho gaya!* [It is done!] You come before me and it is finished. You offer me ten thousand one hundred and eleven rupees, it is finished. I shall do everything for you." All these are lies.

This again is a problem with our religion, you see. That the *shraaddha* [ceremony prepared for the departed soul] can be done by putting a *yajaman* – put somebody in your place and you walk away, and he does it for you. How on earth can somebody do and somebody else benefit? Can I eat and your hunger be fulfilled? Can I meditate and you get liberation? If that was possible, Babuji Maharaj – that most loving, most generous of saints, highest ever – he would have liberated all of us by one meditation of his own! I don't think he would have withheld liberation from us. He would have said, "My children, don't worry. I love you too much to send you ahead of me. I will at least take you with me." Why on earth should *he* have lived?

So, if Babuji could not do it and had to say, "Well, Lalaji could give liberation by the glance of an eye," well, good, that was his capacity; but we had to be deserving. Because you must remember, in Sahaj Marg we don't believe in killing you to liberate you. Is it possible? Yes, but not by keeping you temporally alive in your body. So we have to do it. Sahaj Marg is a severely practical system. There is no need for theory. There is no need for philosophy. Every *dehaati* [villager] can do it, so long as he understands the three basic principles of meditation, cleaning, constant remembrance, things like that.

We have only to understand what we have to *do*, no more. But we go around asking funny questions, seeking knowledge which is useless, seeking clarification which is not relevant. "How to meditate?" Well, this is the method. "What to do during cleaning?" This is what you have to do. "What is prayer meditation?" This is it. Enough. If these three things we understand and do with a heart, apply ourselves assiduously, diligently, faithfully, regularly, it is impossible that the goal can be withheld from us. More understanding we





do not need. "What is liberation?" I will see when I get there. "What is the brighter world?" I will know when I get there. "What is Hyderabad?" Well, we know when we have come here what is Hyderabad. "Tell me what is Hyderabad and then I will go there." Well, I can show you pictures. But the brighter world has no pictures.

So we are, on one side, avaricious for money and wealth and all these things; on the other side we have an equal avariciousness for knowledge, and therefore we suffer. We want knowledge, not the reality. We want promises – not to do it by ourselves and get it as a right of purpose, through practice. We want assurances when all the assurance that I need is that if I do it, I *must* have it. It is a promised thing. It is promised not by some third person but by the fact that a practice *must* lead to the result. If I put my hand into fire, it must burn. It is not a promise that the fire makes. It is its quality.

So, "Ask, and it shall be given unto thee; seek, and thou shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto thee." Very good, wonderful promises for people who don't want to do anything except to sit before somebody and get what they think they can get. In Sahaj Marg I don't think there are gifts. There are no presents. The present is the system. The present is the guru's capacity to teach us. Once we start doing it, what is the next present? The time enough that we should practise and reach the goal. In that sense, all the span of life that we need is the time necessary to reach the goal. I mean we are all so anxious to reach Calcutta in fourteen hours, Delhi in eleven hours, Madras in six hours. Why not eighteen hours to go home? Why not seventy-six hours? Why not seventy-six days? But we are anxious, we are restless to get to our destination. Why not here? Here, too, we have a destination, we have a home. That restlessness is lacking in us: "*Ho jaayega* – by Babuji's grace it shall happen." Yes, but when? Babuji Maharaj said, "I would like to see you all develop to the highest in my lifetime." Why did he say that?

We miss the meaning of what we read. We interpret it as we choose. We ascribe meanings according to our desires, but we will not sit down and meditate for an hour or do the cleaning regularly. Every abhyasi suffers from these defects. It is like the boy who said, "I practise constant remembrance frequently, half an hour a day." So, the promise of Sahaj Marg, the promise of the Master, everything depends on what Babuji said: "Do and feel." So every time we stand up somewhere to speak, we say, "Read and enjoy. Do and feel." We are always reading and enjoying but the 'do and feel' aspect is conveniently forgotten, because we don't want to *do*. "What is this problem, Sir, every day meditation, every day cleaning, diaries to write?" Yes, but what about the problem of eating every morning, eating every afternoon, eating every evening? Nobody seems to complain about that.

So, you see, we suffer from too many weaknesses. Of course the biggest weakness is the weakness of the will. But that weak will we are able to apply to things which we want to do, which we desire. So the will is not really weak. It has not been trained. It is like the ability to read Sherlock Holmes for eight hours a day but being unable to study physics for half an hour. "Why don't you study physics?" "It is difficult." "What do you mean by difficult?" You are not able to apply your mind. "Why are you not able to apply your mind?" "I don't like physics."

Therefore the difference is only in liking and not liking something. If I like it, I am able to apply my will, my mind, to things that I want to do. What I don't like, I am not able to apply myself to. It is like our capacity to love persons who are lovable and to hate everybody else. "Why are you able to love this person?" "Because he is my friend." "But how did he become your friend? Only after loving him, isn't it?"

So how can universal love be possible so long as we have this funny idea of somebody is lovable and somebody is not lovable; somebody is good and somebody is bad? As souls embodied in bodies, there is no distinction between us. If you look at mere bodies, every body is different. It is not just that everybody is different; every 'body' is different. So as long as you look at the differences, we have this idea of loving and hating, or being indifferent to persons, places, things. As long as you look for that which is the same in everybody we are able to go nearer and nearer this ideal of universal love – not by loving individuals, but by stopping to hate, by stopping to be indifferent to them. How is the Master able to love everybody, as people say, "Babuji loved all of us"? Even people who never came into contact with Babuji, abhyasis who have come into the system after his Mahasamadhi claim that they see his form, they feel his presence; most of all they feel his love. What is this mystery of a person who is not here physically amongst us, and yet we feel his love to such an extent that people are able to weep because of his love for us?

If a person who is not here physically can love us, should we who are here not be able to love in the same way as he? How did he manage it? How did he develop that capacity? Same story: Meditation, cleaning, constant remembrance, love for the Master. What Lalaji did, what Babuji did, it is the same thing that we are asked to do. But yet we don't want to do it and become like them, though every day, every moment we are saying, "I want to be like the Master." So there is something wrong in this wanting, or in the degree of wanting, the depth of wanting. The yearning, the craving is missing. How to make it possible? Make the Mission yours, make the practice yours – then see the difference.

It is not enough to be members of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. It is not enough to be abhyasis doing the abhyas with ten percent of their minds, one percent of their hearts, and possibly five percent of the time that should be allotted to it. Sahaj Marg must become something that *lives* within me: continuously I am meditating whether I am meditating or not; continuously I am remembering him whether I remember him or not, with every breath of our being, when eating, when sleeping. Then you cannot say you are a *member* of the Mission. You cannot just say that "I am a member of the Mission." You are something more. You cannot just say you are an abhyasi; you are something more. "Sahaj Marg is my life, the Mission is my body." It must come to something like that, if you have to be really successful, really make some speedy progress, really get There where we want to go. Otherwise this superficial practice, the superficial approach, the superficial dedication and devotion, will only pay six percent interest. If you want capital, and interest, many times that capital, you have to put your heart into things. This is essentially the way of the heart. It has nothing to do with the head.

I repeat that all the understanding that we need is the fundamental understanding of the practice. Once that is there and we are able to do the practice faithfully, assiduously, not to please some master living somewhere or not living somewhere, but with the understanding that "it is for *my* sake that I am doing it, and any pleasure that the master may derive is incidental." If we do this, then we shall be successful in this sense that the goal is within our hands. Otherwise we are like children studying to please their parents. Parents are easily pleased. So long as the boy passes they are happy, because they are interested in their self-respect, not the child's welfare. "My son has never failed in life." That is their ego and pride. But if the child studies, knowing that it is studying for itself, for its future, it is in a sense investing its present in its future. That child will shine. Similarly an abhyasi who invests his heart in his future or her future, will shine in spirituality. It is for that shining abhyasi that we are waiting – shining *abhyasis*, all of you must shine like that. Tradition speaks of one Dhruva, as in a star. One boy so disciplined, so craving, so God-loving, that he was put into the heavens, in the firmaments, as a shining star which we call the North Star – *Dhruva Nakshatra* we call it, the Pole Star. What about the other stars?

Why not every soul shine like a star? That is the individual goal of each abhyasi. That is the consolidated goal of the Mission. That is the total goal of human endeavour. And I hope that we will all assiduously practise, remembering that Basant is there for one who believes Basant is today also with me. This calendar approach to Basant Panchmi is a destructive method, is a limiting method, of limiting Basant to three or four meditations. But for me, Basant is always in my heart. If you are all able to develop that attitude, daily it is all Basant, like the constant remembrance of the Master means that he is always with you. If he is always with you, you are always with him. If you are both together, you are in the same place as he is; it matters not whether he is in the brighter world, or here, or in some lower worlds. We must not crave the brighter world to such an extent that we are afraid of going down to the lower worlds with him. If he says, "Come with me, I am going down to hell to supervise and to put right certain equipment there, corrective equipment," we must be able to go down with him.

Where he can go, I *must* go. Where he walks, I *must* walk. Where he is, I must be – always, eternally. I pray that all of us will have the strength of purpose, the dedication to ourselves (big 'Self' inside me), to make this possible. I pray for his blessings on all of you.

Thank you.

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Where Is God?

Dharma [righteousness] – I am taking a big risk in speaking about this in Kolkata, where every street has a *kalibaadi* [Kali temple] and things like that. But we have found this, our country, our civilisation, is fundamentally a history of decadence from the highest ideals, the loftiest ideals, the spiritual ideals, the ultimate ideals of the past, to their concretisation into stone and brick and metal. If today man has become material – Pramod *bhai* [brother] said we are all materially successful here in Kolkata – we think of material success *only* because our society has become one of material values, when even God has to be material – an idol or something like that. How can you think of wealth as anything but material wealth, health as anything but material health, knowledge as anything but material knowledge? Therefore there are big companies selling books on an instalment basis – books which

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everybody buys but nobody reads. Every house has a puja room where you have a god which you don't worship. You may pray, but you don't worship.

Prayer and worship are two different things. We pray because we beg. As Babuji Maharaj said, "Prayer is begging." We are all ready to beg. Now, there also we are lazy. We don't want to go out and beg. For one thing, we become ashamed that our begging is seen by everybody else. So we prefer to beg in the privacy of our own homes. And to fool ourselves that we are not begging, we make these begging halls of ours, begging rooms of ours, of marble and gold. We are really beggars in a beggar's *chawl* [living quarters], begging before a *putli* [puppet/idol]. So I make bold again to say, "Where god is, He is not." I would like you all to write this down in your diaries, because it's a bit troublesome to understand – not that you don't want to understand, but you are afraid of understanding.

Swami Vivekananda said, "In India, religion has descended into the kitchens." People must bathe. People must have *aachaara*, *niyama, anushtaanaa* [observance of rituals]. They must cook with wet clothes; they must go to the temples with wet clothes. What about the bodies? The clothes don't sin. But everywhere you find this farce – clean clothes! I have a friend who used to be very immoral, and after every one of his episodes, he used to go to the temple to beg forgiveness of the Lord and he used to buy a new *dhoti* [cloth worn around the waist]. So every time he bought a new dhoti, we all laughed because we knew what he had done. He was so superstitious, so guilty, that he didn't believe in washed dhotis any more – only new dhotis. And strangely enough, when somebody dies, the body is wrapped in a new cloth. You see the equivalence of sin and death? New clothes for the sinner, new clothes for the dead body. So what is the difference between the two?

When we consign a sinful body to the flames, we are acknowledging that it was a sinful body, that it has sinned throughout its life, that it sinned even against God in confining Him to, or trying to confine Him to, a putli, pretending to worship when we were only begging; offering milk and honey which we ate later; giving Him prasad which we distributed later – nothing for Him, everything for ourselves.

Our history of our civilisation of India, the land that was great once upon a time, that was a beacon of light in this universe once upon a time, that produced giants of spirituality once upon a time, has fallen to mere begging, whether it is in a gilt and gold hall or in a hut, or whether the idol is gold or of mud, it's no different. A beggar begs from anything. A beggar on the corner of Hazra road, he will beg from anybody who passes. He has no discrimination.

When I was in college here in Raja Basanta Roy Road corner, near Lake Road corner, there used to be a blind beggar. He stood twenty-four hours a day:

"*Ondho ke doya koroon, ondho ke doya koroon, ondho ke doya koroon.* [Show mercy for the blind, show mercy for the blind, show mercy for the blind.]" He did not know who gave, he did not know how many gave, he did not know the thousands of people who did not give him anything. So, we have made our gods into givers of benefits, and if one does not give, we go before the other and beg. "*Unhone nahi diya*, [He did not give,]" so we go to Shiva Bhagwan. He doesn't give, we go to a *gurudwara* [Sikh temple]. There nothing happens; we go to an Islamic temple. There nothing happens; we go to a Vaishnavaite *mandir* [temple]. So like the beggar stands in one place and begs from everybody who is passing, we are passing and begging before everybody whom we pass. What is the difference? That beggar has the sense at least to remain where he is – we are wandering beggars.

So once again I repeat for your benefit: Where god is, *He* is not. If you find God in a concretised form, we should run away from that. It is a plaything, a toy. Most of all, in Kolkata, we should believe this. This is the land of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. It is the land of Kali. It is the land where both were playing together like mother and son, sister and brother, lover and beloved, where ultimately Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had to give up that stupidity, that nonsense, and go into meditation. Yes, Kali is great, but there are greater things to achieve. Kali is a goddess, but we are not after goddesses and gods.

We are after the Ultimate. What is the Ultimate? Is it God? Find out. The Ultimate can be God, but god is not the Ultimate. Any god you can name is not the Ultimate. Any god with a form is not the Ultimate. Any god with qualities, attributes, is not the Ultimate.

We worship Kubera. What can Kubera give us? There is this utmost indecency, obscene indecency, where Lord Venkateshwara has been borrowing from Kubera to support his love affair with a woman. He is up on the hills, the exalted Lord, the Lord of the seven hills. She is below. They have a love affair. She demands money like all lovers want and, because she is a goddess, or at least she was going to be the, what should I say, the courtesan of a god (certainly not his wife), her demands were extraordinarily high, and he had to go to no less a person than to Kubera himself. And the story of Venkatachalapati is one of not being able to pay even the interest, leave alone the principal. And whenever the collections are low, they put *hathkadi* [handcuffs] on the Lord there in the temple! And then devotees put money there to release their god. You see what a cheap thing we have made of our temples, of our gods, of our Creator. We make him a mere human being, with the lust of a human being, with the cheap love affair of a human being, a god who can have a keep [mistress] who has extraordinary demands which no wife would even dream of demanding from her husband. No wife demands. Poor things – our women of India, they don't ask. They are *wives*. Wives never ask. Wives never demand.

But you have an affair with a girl, you see, and then you know what can happen. Lord Venkatachalapati is still paying the interest! And Kubera is happy. It is like moneylenders. They are happy. They don't want the principal back. Never make the mistake of thinking a moneylender gives you money to get his money back. He wants your interest all your life. Pay and pay and pay and pay. If you offer to pay the principal back, he will say, "*Kya jaldi hai?* [What is the hurry?] You can pay me later. *Koyi jaldi nahi.* [There is no hurry]." And we think he is a good moneylender. Moneylenders are never good. Such women are never good. Even from God they extort. But is this true? Now we are all smiling, we are happy, because perhaps each one of us has a girl hidden somewhere and we have all passed through this sometime, or we hope to pass through this sometime. We had a young prefect once who read these stories of Vishwamitra and Menaka, and he said, "Sir, when will my chance come?" I said, "For what?" He said, "For the temptation, for which I am waiting! No Menaka has come my way yet." I said, "Perhaps you have to struggle a little more before your Menaka comes. You must be at least a Vishwamitra to have a Menaka." Not any fool can have a Menaka or an Urvashi or a Rambha!

So this *laalach* [greed] is always there. When we go to temples we go with our laalach, not with our *bhakti* – not with our devotion, not to God. "God, let me find my girlfriend. Let her be mine." "Lord, let me find a lottery which I will win." "Lord, if it is possible, give me the Kamadhenu [the sacred cow that provides her owner with whatever he desires] so that I don't have to come and ask you again and again for petty gifts. You are the great giver. Why don't you give me once and for all, and be done with it? One Kamadhenu – is it big for you? Why do you put me to this humiliation of coming to you every morning and begging for daily *rozgaari* [employment]. Like the Christians pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Why not be great as they say you are – the Brihadishwara [The Great God]. Why don't you do one grand gift and put me away beyond want, beyond everything, and also include *mukti* [liberation]." Also include mukti – it is the last thing. And then we add a codicil to that: "Don't be in a hurry to give me mukti. Let me enjoy all that you are going to give me, assuming that you are going to give these things to me. I need life to enjoy, you know."

Hinduism says 'long life' – *shatamaanam bhavati shataayuh* (may you receive a hundred honours, may you live a hundred years.) So our society is bound to this tradition of long life and honours, and in the process we are leading lives of dishonour, shortening our lives progressively until today we find people are old at twenty, at fifteen, at twelve. Their hair starts greying, their powers start weakening. I am always ashamed when some of these young fellows who should be stalwarts, they come to me and say, "Sir, at sixty-five, you are ten times as strong as I am." I am ashamed because it should be the other way around. They should be ten times as strong as I am. And imagine what that could be. And how is this possible? You know.

So don't seek God in temples; He is not there. Of course if you want to, as we say in South India, split hairs in argumentation, you can say, "But He is everywhere." Then why don't you seek Him in your toilet? He must be there, too. Is He not there? Why don't you seek Him in your bedroom? He must be there. Instead of guiltily turning the picture of god towards the wall, why don't you open Him? Put more pictures and say, "Look how to enjoy life." But we are guilty. In our bedrooms we are guilty; in our toilets we are guilty; in our money rooms we are guilty, most of all. We don't want even God to see us when we are counting our notes.

We are living a guilt-ridden life. Therefore we pray so much. "God, forgive me. God, have mercy upon me. God, you are great. Thou art the *Rehman – Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim*!" (God the merciful, the forgiver.) Why this notion of forgiving and mercy? Only sinners think of these things. And what is sin? Sahaj Marg does not say anything about sin. It is mercifully, and very intelligently and wisely and truthfully, silent – because there is no such thing as sin. Sin is in your mind. If you do something which *you* think is wrong, it is a sin for you. Another man may do it and get off scot-free. So, this idea of sin and virtue, good and bad, God and the devil.... The same God comes as the devil. Kali is the mother, Kali is the destroyer. And then we have glib tales – how a spider eats its own first born; how a dog eats up its puppies.... "Mother can also be destroyer, sir." Now, I question this concept. We cannot transpose values of life from the insect world to human society. I have not heard of any human mother eating up her baby – at least not their own babies! They may eat other babies if there is a cannibalistic tendency in them.

We have perverted the teachings, twisted the teachings to suit our temperament. I have to beg, therefore, let God be the divine giver – He who gives – *annadaata* [the giver of food]. I need to be forgiven, so let Him be the forgiver. I am afraid, therefore let Him be the punisher. I will die, therefore let Him be the Lord of death. I am going to be born, therefore let him be the Lord of birth. I need protection, therefore let him be the Lord of protection: Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Yamraj, Kuber! We have created gods not in our image – as Christianity says, "God created man in His image." Here man is creating God according to his fancies. We even have gods of medicine, doctors – Dhanvantri, MD. We must give him an honorary degree – Dhanvantri, MD. Or ND – doctor of naturopathic medicine, like Don Sabourin.

So you see, our gods are need-based gods. What we need at that moment, we think that God is to fulfil that particular need. If a man doesn't have a wife, he says, "Lord, bless me with a wife. You have your Lakshmi and your Saraswati and all these. Why don't you bless me? Not with two because I cannot cope with two, but one. And make her nice, make her beautiful. Put Urvashi, Rambha, Tilottama and everybody into one. You are the Perfect. You can make the perfect. Give me the perfect…" wife – not perfection, but the perfect wife, the perfect society, the perfect money, the perfect income-tax officer who will do my tax affairs without taking a bribe, who will not question my accounts.

When Hindus say they are religious, I laugh at them. Sometimes I laugh openly, very often I laugh inside, which is perhaps why I get so sick so often – because if I cannot laugh openly, the laughter builds up in me until one day it is likely to explode. I laugh, you see. I laugh with sarcasm, I laugh sardonically, I laugh with grief, I laugh with misery. Your God you have made into this? How will He ever forgive you? It is too naive to say, "My God will ultimately forgive me because He is a forgiver." How do you know? If you have pushed Him into such roles, miserable roles, made Him act various parts according to your need, condemned Him when He did not fulfil your requirements, despised Him, loathed Him, cursed Him, how on earth do you believe He is ever going to come and rescue you? Therefore there is no rescue.

Therefore God says, "*Theek hai* [All right], it doesn't matter to me." If there are a million ants walking up this wall, who bothers about them? Are you thinking of any of those ants? "Poor ant! Let me feed it. Let me put a drop of milk in its path." Have you ever done it? Why do you think God is interested in us? *We* should be interested in God. Isn't it? So don't make this mistake of thinking that we are a holy society, we are a religious society, we are a Vedic society. All nonsense, lies. We are a corrupt society, self-seeking society, avaricious society, miserable society, sick society. And if out of the misery and sickness of this mire 'of despond' as they say (Dante I think has put it like that), if you have to come out of it, we have to seek one who can pull us out of that. *Daldal* [quicksand] – *Daldal mein fas gaye to kisi ka haath pakadna padta hai.* [If you are trapped in quicksand, you have to hold someone's hand.] "No, no, I don't want you. Let God come." Which God? From where? Has He no other business?

So you see, it is said, ask not of god, ask Him. Who is this 'Him'? You have to find out. Now, I have never seen God letting down a rope to a man *fasa-od* [trapped] in a daldal, or coming in a helicopter pulling him up. That is all good for science fiction stories, fantasy stories. God coming to rescue the elephant – all tall talks, stories. Because we have progressively become so cheap and mean and corrupt, our gods have become progressively stronger and more merciful and more kind and more loving. In the beginning, He was nothing. God is Nothing. Or as Babuji said, "He partakes of the essence of nothingness." You cannot say He is nothing. Nothingness – no qualities, no names, no attributes, no forms, no nothing! But as human beings fell thousands of years, we have progressively made our gods more and more important, more and more diverse, more and more – the pantheon has been expanded. One God of the past became three, then became thirty, then became three hundred. Today every putli on every street corner is a god. Politicians are gods, cinema stars are gods. A minister is distributing this Filmfare award and every film star touches his feet. God help them! God help the minister! Should he not tell them, "What are you touching my feet for, you ass, stupid fellow? What are you touching my feet for? I am a corrupt minister. Don't touch my feet. The infection may come to you." Instead of that he is happy. He is also blessing them – "*Aashirvaad* [Blessings]!" Our gods have become more awesome, more fearful, more powerful, as we have become sicker and sicker in our minds. Remove the sickness, remove the need to beg, remove the need for fear of Him and you will find, progressively, our gods disappear until there is nothing.

The way of Sahaj Marg is the way from the solid to the transcendental Nothingness, from the way of form to the formless, from the world of attributes to that of no attributes, from the world of qualities to that of no qualities, from the world of asking to, perhaps, a world where you may have to give. Because that God, the Ultimate, the Para Brahman as we call Him, gives nothing, takes nothing. We need, in between, someone who can take something, give something. Take what? Give what? Well, every abhyasi should have understood by now that such a person must take away your samskaras and give you back spiritual values, spiritual judgement, spiritual guidance, spiritual life. Therefore such a person is really a life-giver. Therefore in Sahaj Marg, Babuji said, you can look upon the guru in any way you like: as father, mother, guide, friend, beloved. But he said, "Of all I prefer the concept of guru as mother because He is the life-giver." Under all circumstances the mother loves her child, supports it, succours it, gives to it again and again until the mother herself is dead.

So forget God. In any case, we never remembered Him, so where is the question of forgetfulness of God? Who has remembered God? We have only remembered our idols (our *murtis*) and our temples. Where god is, He is not. I repeat for the fourth or fifth time. So we have remembered that which is not, instead of remembering that which *is.* We have remembered beautiful forms, beautiful idols, so-called powerful deities, so-called benevolent givers, with fear. "What He gives, let Him not take away." Because the giver can take. So we are afraid when God gives, as we think that He may take it away again from us.

So, "God, give in such a fashion that you don't ask me for it." Therefore we are afraid of death. God has given me life – let Him not take away my life. He neither gives nor takes. My life is His life. When I am able to understand this truth that I am not separate from Him, then I have no separate life from His life. I have no separate existence from His existence. Then how can I die? How can I live? In such a condition of absolute certainty of total realisation of the truth of my oneness with my Creator, I must know that if I die, He too dies. And since He cannot die, I cannot die.

Thank you.

5

Transmitting Spirituality to Future Generations

Somehow there was a mention of this famous Gujarati speaker, Murari Babu. Lakhs of people attend his lectures and someone quoted Murari Babu as having asked a question: "Why do so many people come to listen to my talks day after day after day – ten days, fifteen days, three hours a day, four hours a day. Will anybody go and listen to a political talk from the same man day after day for hours?" So Murari Babuji said, "It is because there is a craving in the human to hear of truths we have forgotten; to be reminded of goals we have forgotten; to be awoken (woken up) to aspirations that we have lost; to be exposed to values which have disappeared – to be exposed, in fact, to a new life, or the *possibility* of a new life." *Dharma* [righteousness] they call it. We call it life. So, the secret is not in what the speaker

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26 February 1992, Kolkata, India

says. The secret is in the one who listens. The success or failure of a talk is not with the speaker. As I always tell our ladies, our sisters – it is no use your cooking your food and saying, "It is good." The man who eats must say it is good.

Here the question is not whether it is good or bad – whether it is good to hear it or not. We hear always of *karnaamritam* [nectar to the ears]. "It was like *amrit* [nectar] to the ears." Because we have to go beyond hearing. What is told to us is to enable us to do something afterwards, but most of us just listen and go away – happy to have heard something wonderful, something profound.

Now, I have always been bothered about this business of something being profound. "Oh, I heard something profound today!" But everybody doesn't say it is profound. Some people say it is profound, some people laugh. Some make jokes, some tease. There may be even some people who like to take it away and throw it off in a gesture of defiance. So, what is profound depends on the listener. If you have heard it and it has touched your heart and gone into the bottom-most level of your heart, the core of your heart, *you* feel it as profound. As my Guruji, Babuji Maharaj, used to say, "There is water in every well, but only the thirsty drink." Just because there is water, we don't drink. When we are thirsty, we drink. Now some of us assume, rightly or wrongly, that thirsty people come to these talks – people who want to hear something. Some come to scoff, some come to laugh, some come to criticise. It is a tragic fact that only a few benefit by these things. It is not our fault that the scoffer also comes to scoff.

In every lecture, you have some hecklers. But what are they for? They too must have some craving in themselves, otherwise why trouble to come and heckle at all? They should not be there, if it was only to heckle. So, it is our business to make a heckler into a non-heckler; to make a superficial person experience something profound. In reality there is an interaction between the speaker and the listener. One who comes with, shall we say, a cynical attitude – "Yes, I have heard this nonsense hundreds of times!" Well, there is a saying, "The bucket goes into the water hundreds of times (into the well)" – because the water is necessary. You cannot have a bucket so big that you let it into the well once and for all and satisfy your requirements of water for life. So, day after day, hundreds of times during every day you put in that bucket and draw out your water.

Meditation is such a process. Speaking is such a process. We repeat without repetition. We talk about the same thing. Every person on earth talks about God. The jargon is different; the situation is different; the language is different. Some speak in Hebrew, some speak in Arabic, some speak in Tamil, English, Urdu – I don't know what else. But the thing we talk about is the same. Love – *ishq*, *mohabbat*, *pyaar*, *prem*; it's all the same. But when you say it in Hindi, it makes a different impression on the sisters who know Hindi. When you say it in English, it makes a different impression on those who know English. But as my Master used to say, "Love has no language." When there is love, you don't need language. When there is no love, language becomes a *tool* to convey what you have to convey. But I have always suspected, you see, that the speaker who cannot love his audience, cannot speak. He only vomits something and goes away – especially paid speakers.

So we have to, in a really profound situation, a situation of depth, where it is a matter of life, of a future life as our sister Hansa-*behen* said, "where you need perspective to go beyond, to rise above," we have to rise above language too. We have to rise above syntax, beyond grammar, beyond the beauty of language, because otherwise we fall into the error of admiring poetry, glamorous speakers, going by the externals and not by the internals. The hearer must be able to discern something other than what is being spoken. "What is the import of what this fellow is trying to say?" We are talking all the time of meditation. What *is* meditation? Can you explain in words? Can you sell a banana by explaining about it? You tell your buyer, "Please eat a bit of it and see for yourself." An apple looks very nice on the outside but rotten inside. So the salesman slices off a bit and says, "Eat it and then pay me."

You cannot experience anything profound until you are willing to participate in that which has to be *done*. Hearing is no use. Hearing may give you some idea. How to go from here to Gariahat? Well, you take the first right, second left, third, fourth, you know. But until I go, I don't know where is Gariahat, what is Gariahat, why I am going there. So, the Shastras speak of listening as the first step – *sravana* [hearing]. Most people stop there. Unfortunately, tragically, most people listen and go away, whether it is to a Chinmayananda or an Aurobindo or the great Vivekananda himself. Vivekananda was supposed to have made such a smashing lecture in his Chicago address, Parliament of Religions. What is the result? Was it his fault that there was no result? Given the time span between his Chicago lecture and today, almost a century has passed. We should have had hundreds of thousands of people meditating in the US. Where are they? That there are a few Ramakrishna Maths here and there in the US is only a testimony to their faith in themselves, their willingness to exist, if not for today, for the future, hoping that if not today – the people of today don't take advantage – somebody may take advantage twenty years hence, a hundred years hence. So the institution abides.

Therefore the institution should not look for success in the present. Institutions must continue to exist. I have heard, especially in the literature from Gurdjieff, that schools open and close. I don't think a school can open and close. That is in villages, where there is a passenger, then there is a bullock cart. It takes you and then he pulls off the bull and puts it under a shady tree and he goes to sleep too. There a passenger attracts the transport, but we must have transport which attracts passengers. Therefore in cities, buses run whether there are passengers or not. I used to be surprised when I went to Denmark – sometimes there is no passenger in the bus, often there are only two or three, but the bus runs. Because *when* somebody may need it, who knows? Otherwise we are like doctors who say, "There is no patient in my clinic," and he closes his door and goes away on a holiday. Five minutes later there is an emergency; somebody comes. Business people keep their shops open. They don't open it when a customer comes, and close it as soon as he is gone. They wait till nine o'clock at night. "Who knows...?" Therefore such institutions which not only give learning but offer a system of practice to take you into transcendental realms of consciousness of being, they have to have an existence transcending the existence of time itself. Therefore they are called eternal.

The school may not exist in a concrete form – the *teaching* exists. Through what? Through you. Swami Vivekananda is no more, but his teaching exists. People still refer to him with faith, with love. People still name streets after him, libraries after him, and it will go on for as long as there are people who wish to know more about these things. The voice is silent, but the teaching is going on and on. So, when a speaker is able to speak something which will last beyond his time, beyond himself, then his teaching is valuable; people will listen. If he is talking of the here and now – "How to raise the price of sugar or drop it? What to do about the budget the day after tomorrow? How to influence the taxation authorities?" – we are talking of the here and now. It only lasts the life of a newspaper, a few hours. People who seek fame in newspapers are therefore seeking transitory fame, momentary fame – fame for a few moments of time. Next moment it becomes a piece of paper in which you wrap a piece of *gud* [jaggery] or a bunch of grapes.

That which lasts is not the man. That which lasts is not buildings. That which lasts is a body of teaching, a body of practice. *How* is it transmitted through time? Through people who practise and keep it alive. That is the difference between a pond and a river. The river flows ceaselessly. The pond is trapped into a geographical environment. It stinks, its water evaporates, it becomes dry. A river goes perennially through time. Therefore rivers are worshipped, not ponds.

In India we have this funny idea of Ganga being a holy river, Narmada being a holy river, Brahmaputra being a holy river. Why? Because from the transcendental heights of the snows where they melt and come down until they reach their ocean, there is a continuity of flow from the source to the goal.

So we human beings, especially those who aspire to civilise themselves in a spiritual way, we are not only to transmit our genes and chromosomes by the process of physical reproduction. That every animal does, bird does, beast does, and we do it avidly, with enormous interest in it, lustfully, joyfully, lovingly. Situation may change. But are we just transmitters of genes and chromosomes, or are we to transmit something better, something more profound, something with the transcendental dignity of divinity itself? Therefore comes this idea of a spiritual father, a spiritual mother, a spiritual child, a spiritual marriage, as distinct from human marriages, human parentage, human children, you see. Your human children transmit your human genes. The spiritual children must transmit the spiritual genes – if I may use that term, though it's not correct.

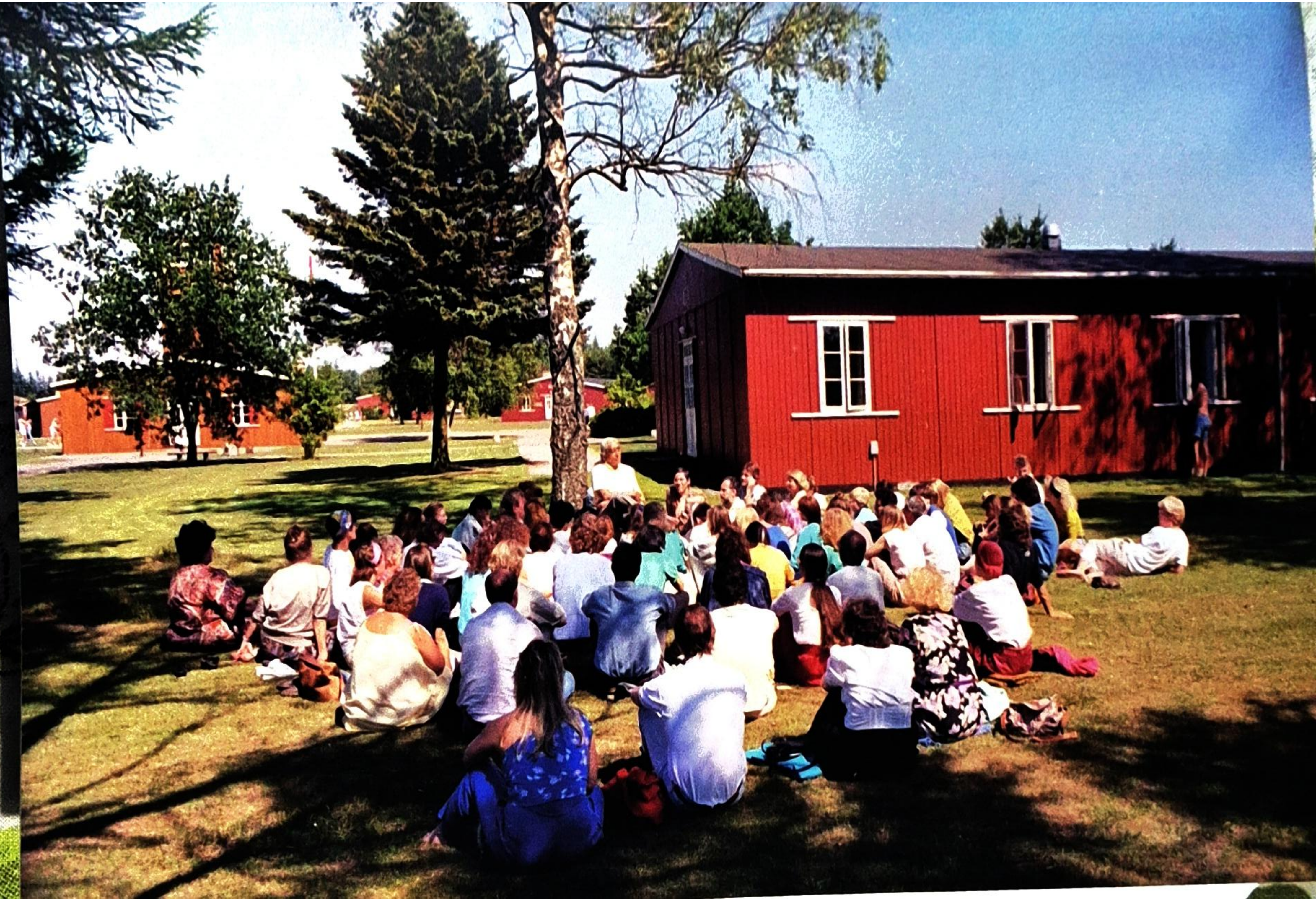
So you see, we abhyasis have, shall we say, a commitment, a responsibility to the future that we consider ourselves as transmitters more than anything else. And if the chain of transmission is broken, God help us. So let us not take spirituality just as a game, as something we do for an hour and a half. Let us not, as my Babuji Maharaj put it, use spirituality as a toilet under pressure of need, to be visited for ten minutes and come out relieved. We are not here to relieve ourselves, even of our miseries. We are not here to find satisfaction and pleasure. They are transitory. We are here to absorb, grow into something which, by nature, naturally, will be transmitted to those with whom we come in contact. Physical breeding involves cohabitation of the sexes. Here it is a cohabitation of a different sort. It is a spiritual union which must produce a spiritual, divine child.

Most of us unfortunately come here for the present. We are thinking of today, today's problems. "What to do about disharmony in my marital life?" "How to pass my examinations?" "How to get rid of my sickness?" "How to have mukti? What is mukti? It is a stupid thing. What is liberation for? What will you do after liberation? Can anybody tell me what they hope to do after they are liberated? "Oh, we shall be free." Free to do what? Are you happy on a holiday when there is nobody with you, just lying in the sun in an easy chair with sunglasses over your eyes? You get bored after a couple of hours. You want company, and you want company of the right sort – somebody you can speak to. You don't want a villager sitting at your feet and saying, "*Kaa kahaa saheb aapne?* [Sir, what did you say?]" You need to communicate. Communicate what? From *your* level. Is it possible to communicate from your level to a lower level? Yes. That is our job. Therefore don't laugh at the villager when he comes and sits next to you in his chair and says, "Teach me," and you say, "Oh, have you college education?" Not necessary. We don't need college education. What do you need? A heart! Teaching involves an open heart – not glibness of the tongue, not knowledge, not university degrees, no curriculum, nothing.

Somebody was saying, "Why in the presence of the Master there is so much love and harmony?" Because the Master is like an open flower – not afraid of the bees, not afraid of the ants, willing to be sniffed at by everybody. A closed bud does not distribute its perfume into the air. When it opens, the perfume comes. This is the secret of human life. We are all closed. As Arunbhai said, "We put our riches away into the banks and expose our sordid, stupid, miserable, ugly self-seeking selves." Therefore we are hated, we are distrusted, we are shunned by society. People say, "What is he doing here? He must have come for some *svaarth* – some personal need. He is a selfish blighter. He never comes except when his self-interest is involved." You get a telephone call and you say, "Oh, people call me only when they want something from me. Nobody calls to ask about me. Nobody calls me to say I love you. They only want, want, want." Are you willing to give, give, give? Then people will come to you. Why should people come to you when you want something?

So, are you able to fill? Are you *willing*? Is your heart open enough to say, like Christ says, "Come all unto me. Come ye unto me. Suffer them to come unto me." Are you willing? Are you ready? Are you prepared? Not with the head, not with a momentary emotional setup which says, "Yes, Master, I am here." I have heard too many people saying it. Are you willing to put your life? Spiritual transmission, I mean not in the sense of the Sahaj Marg transmission of pranahuti, but the ability to *transmit* the spiritual lore, the spiritual wisdom, the spiritual greatness, the spiritual *heights* of possibilities, of evolution – this transmission needs people who are willing to open their heart at both ends so that it may go through you. Here there is no room for a person who says, "I will take and I will keep." Society is full of such people who want to take and to keep. This is not the place for that. Here you have to take, add and give. In a sense, like a bank: take money, add interest to it and give.

Spiritual life is a life of giving – giving with love, without consciousness of giving. Why do I give? I don't know. Why do you give to your children? Why do you feed your child? Can you not throw it away into the garbage can and be free of it? Some mothers do. Fortunately they are a minuscule proportion. They are the desperate ones who don't know how to love their child because the child was begotten without love. Where there is no love in a marriage, the child is misbegotten. It doesn't have to be on the other side of the – whatever they say, the other side



of the blanket. Any child begotten without love is a misbegotten child. Such children are unwanted from the beginning and the child even in the womb senses it. It struggles, it says, "Why are they bringing me into a world when I am not wanted in it? They are going to hate me. They are going to put their sins upon me. They are going to punish me for their sin." Are we willing to love the children even when we don't love our wives? Children born out of lust – of *kama*. So, make sure that you have love in our heart before you breed. Love for what? Not 'love for' – love. Because when there is love in the heart, it is like light in the lamp; it illuminates everything. Then you love whomever you marry, you see; it doesn't matter any more whom you marry. Because you have become love. Like honey is sweet to anybody who eats it. Poison is poison to anybody who takes it.

Love is love when you have love in you. You have become love and now every person feels that love. You have no special love for your wife, no special love for your children. Your neighbour's child is as your child. "Love thy neighbour as thyself," Christianity says. How is it possible? To the ordinary human being it is impossible. "How can I love my neighbour as myself? I love myself too much – beyond everything. My neighbour, I despise, because he makes too much noise. He takes away more water. He takes away the fruit from my tree which is branching out over his garden." So, we are suspicious. We hate.

We have to become love. Now, how to become love? That is what we try to do here in Sahaj Marg. Remove the hatred from yourself. Because my Master said, there is no such thing as creating love. All that is necessary is to remove the hatred in your heart, the suspicion in your heart, the mistrust in your heart, born out of centuries of bondage, centuries of thraldom in which we have been beaten around by politics, by science, by religion.

Everything has made us as a slave today. We are slaves of science as much as of religion. We are slaves of religion as much as we are slaves of politics. More than anything else, we are slaves of our lower selves, which say, "Do," and we have to do. Nobody does evil wantonly, nobody tells lies wantonly. The inner nature says, "Don't tell the truth." Because it is a common question we are asked. "*Satyameva jayate* [Truth alone triumphs] – it is all right to carve it on stones. Is it possible in today's life to exist speaking the truth?" Then what is Gandhiji about? Why do we name Gandhiji's streets and Gandhi Manram and Gandhi Nivas and all this nonsense? Why should we carve on stone something we cannot preach, we cannot practise? Try it! *My Experiments with Truth,* Gandhiji wrote. Every one of us should be able to write another book – *My Experiments with Truth*.

My Master used to say, "Right action cannot have wrong results." It may be apparently wrong, momentarily, but as they say, "The mills of God grind slowly but surely. Lies will come out, murder will out," the Englishman says. You cannot hide it. There is no smoke without a fire. How long can you hide a pregnancy? So, seek not to hide that which cannot be hidden, and seek not to hide that which *must* be exposed. Let us put our treasures out for all to use, for all to admire, so that they will forget us in looking at our treasures. When you go into a beautiful carpet shop, you don't look at the slovenly carpet seller. It's a funny thing that the sellers of carpets are usually dirty fellows. They don't bathe. They are too busy making carpets. You look at the carpet, you discuss the price, negotiate and walk out with your carpet.

When you project all that is good in you, best in you, noble in you, who will look at you? Then who will hate you? Who will love you? But instead of that we put all our riches inside deep underground and project everything that is rotten, stupid, ignorant, vicious. And is it any surprise that we are hated? Even our best friends hate us. I know a man whose best friend, supposedly best friend, after twenty-two years they had a bitter quarrel and they never spoke to each other after that. A tiny quarrel! A single comment one man made about the other man's character, but that hit the other man so deeply, because he had been striving to hide that aspect of his character for twenty-two years. And can you hide it from a friend? If he is a true friend, he knows everything about you. Now, a master is supposed to be a friend – the only friend.

Can anything be hidden from him? You may strive to hide but he cannot. I mean, it cannot be hidden from *him*. Don't seek to hide from him. Expose everything to him that is rotten, so that on the other phase, you may expose everything in you that is delightful, glorious, noble, to the rest of the world. See, this is spirituality. Does the master regret having to do it? Not at all. Because he has the ability to remove this, so that finally you are beautiful, glorious, noble, all around. To such a day we look forward in your lives, in every one of your lives, in a certain way selfishly too because as I said, you are the future transmitters of such a profound, such a glorious tradition.

Babuji Maharaj said this was the Sahaj Marg system of meditation. Transmission was there seventy or eighty generations before Raja Dasharatha and then it disappeared. Why did it disappear? Because people thought it was too good for the ordinary folk. Even today, you have people who will not teach you some aspects of medicine. They will not teach you certain secrets of gem cutting or this cutting. Eventually the secret is lost. So, many things have been lost in this great country because of this idea of secrecy in the giver. "No, no, I cannot teach you. This is only for the elite." Who is the elite? The elite is one who has *become* elite, not one who was *born* elite, you see.

Today we have the Master you see, my Master, Ram Chandraji Maharaj, who is willing to trust every one of us with this sacred lore of spiritual evolution to the highest, entrust its practice to our rather besmirched hands, entrust that teaching to our not too trusting hearts, put that enormous burden of transmitting it to future generations on our not very strong shoulders, hoping that as we carry it we will become stronger and stronger. Like anything else, you start carrying twenty kilograms, you can carry twenty-five, then thirty, then forty. Here it is not a physical load, so your capacity can be ultimately infinite, provided you are willing to carry it. If you don't, you lapse back into the sordid world until you have developed again the craving, the eagerness, the anxiety to develop yourself, and the willingness now to lift up a load and say, "In the lifting up of this load, in relieving the others of their burden of this weight, lies my destiny."

Thank you.

6

Become Conduits of the Divine

Respected Doctor Saheb, dear brothers and sisters,

It is easier for me to express myself in English, therefore I request your forbearance because what I say can always be translated into any other language. There is some, I should say, concern that we should try to pass on a correct understanding of the Sahaj Marg system and its practice to abhyasis. I find many abhyasis even from olden times still having a wrong understanding of the system. I have tried to clear these misunderstandings now and then, and I would respectfully submit to our research institute that they should give particular care in their training courses to a proper exposition of the Sahaj Marg system. This may not be the right platform to expatiate upon this point, but since I remember it I will speak about it now.

We have had three to four training courses in English and they have been very productive, no

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3 March 1992, Allahabad, India

doubt. Now we are experimenting with the first course in Hindi, which has been going on for the last two days. After these four courses, I have now come to a sort of tentative finding – I cannot say conclusion, but a tentative finding – on two aspects of this training course.

One, of course, is the proper training of prefects – very important, very essential, because they are the individuals who pass on the training and the practice and the discipline of the system, or they should be. They should be the medium of communication between the teacher and the taught. In that sense we have to train prefects adequately, not just to give sittings but to teach properly what exactly is Sahaj Marg.

I have been concerned that there is a casual approach from many prefects. They say, "No, no, you do it. You'll feel it." What is to be felt? What is to be done? Because the doing is always precedent to the feeling. So, the prefect has to be given a thorough understanding of the subject. What is meditation? What is cleaning? We have to start from the fundamentals. Why they are necessary; how they are all equally important but yet some thing is more important than the other – difficult to understand.

I have often emphasised, right from 1970 in Babuji's presence, with his permission, that cleaning is perhaps more important than sitting in meditation. Now this has to be rightly understood:

why is cleaning more important? Because Babuji Maharaj said, "If you give transmission to a thief, he will become a better thief. If you give him more transmission, he will become the perfect thief." And we have examples in our own satsanghs of sincere people who are yet going on developing in the wrong direction precisely because, perhaps, they don't do the cleaning; they have not been told and they give more importance to the meditation than to the cleaning.

So the prefects have to tackle their jobs on a different footing. It is not enough just to take hold of some abhyasis and start them off. We have to give them individual attention. "Are you doing this? Are you doing that? How do you do this? What do you meditate upon?" We should be asking questions all the time. What is, for instance, the right way of life for an abhyasi? What are human characteristics and tendencies? It is too easy to say that they will develop by themselves automatically. Nothing develops automatically. After all, we have to remember, character transformation in oneself: Babuji Maharaj has said, "It is the responsibility of each abhyasi." It is too facile, it is too simple to say that as you meditate you will become a saint.

Then this question of love for the Master: Will it develop by itself? Is it given by Master's grace or have we to learn to love? Why is it necessary? Where does it lead? Because there are prefects who say, "No, no, as you meditate, love for the Master will develop by itself." It will not. Then the understanding of grace. Because people have been misrepresenting transmission as grace, I am sorry to say. "Grace is flowing." Grace does not flow all that easily. If you have read the books of the Mission you will understand Babuji Maharaj used to say that grace descended one hour every day wherever he was – not more – and that was for him specially.

During Basant Panchami, it was the problem, or it was the need, to pray for grace to cover the whole audience for three days, or two and a half days, the five sittings – not throughout the universe, but wherever it is held. It is ridiculous to suggest that wherever you may be sitting on Basant Panchami day you will get the same condition. You will get the same transmission but not the grace. Now, because this has not been represented properly, this has not been explained properly, there are some centres from where abhyasis never come for Basant. Vijayawada is one such centre. Because Babuji, in his kindness, said, "No, no, you will get wherever you are." But it is now necessary to correct these misunderstandings. It will be wrong to blame Babuji Maharaj also that he did not say it properly. He said, "You will get the transmission wherever you are." He never mentioned anything about grace. He himself has said – I have reported it in some of my writings – that when he was there, present in Basant Panchami to celebrate his Master's birth anniversaries, there was a very special atmosphere over the entire *campus*. And after the fifth sitting was over, it was as if a blanket was taken away from that campus and the ordinary atmosphere started prevailing.

Now, people should read and understand. Should they not immediately ask, "Babuji, what is this? You say wherever I am I will get, but here is your disciple and your prefect reporting you as having said that this is only over Shahjahanpur at that time, wherever you are." Nobody asks. Because I believe nobody reads, or we read our literature like we read novels – skipping pages to come to the last page and saying, "What is the conclusion?" So it is important for abhyasis to be taught what they have to do, what they can expect, because otherwise in some way, deliberately or not, wantonly or not, we are fooling our abhyasis. Everything will come in its time. Everything will come by Master's grace. Today you hear this nonsense of abhyasis saying, "By Master's grace, I got a ticket to come here." "By Master's grace, the *chappal* [slipper] I lost in the utsav was found again." I mean, is it necessary to bring Master's grace for these things? Of course, those who are inclined to argumentation will say, "Do you mean to say there is no grace behind this?" Not at all.

We have to learn to distinguish divine, divinity. What is divine? What is divinity? What is beyond the divinity itself? Babuji's message: "Divine is the way; Divinity is a play." Like humanity is different from human. A human displays humanity. Animals cannot display humanity. But humans are able to display animality – when we become vicious, when we become acquisitive, greedy, lustful. Therefore we have this phenomenon of animal human beings. But you don't have human animals.

So the one who is above can always fall, but the one who is below has to rise by self-effort. Falling is automatic. Falling requires no effort. It only requires withdrawal of effort. And what is this withdrawal of effort? The withdrawal of a sustained will to keep on progressing. Like I was explaining this morning – when you drive a car, you have to put your foot on the accelerator and keep it pressed. If you release the pressure the car will stop. To keep moving, the pressure has to be continuous.

Our will power has to be continuous. We cannot withdraw the will power. Therefore Babuji Maharaj said, "You must train your will even to work in your sleep." Then you are conscious twenty-four hours of the day. Then you are a controlled human being, a self-regulated human being, as regulated in your sleep as in your waking sate. Such a person alone can work even when he is in a coma. Because what is coma but a deeper sleep, a longer sleep? And if you extend that line of thinking, he can work even after death, because death is only the longest sleep. So one who wants to work when asleep, when he wants to make a *sankalpa* [resolve] that "during my sleep let this work go on," he has to train his will power to work when he is not conscious of the will working.

Therefore Babuji, when in his sickness, could claim to have elevated somebody fifty-five points or sixty points, I do not remember – even while in a coma. We are not able to move one finger when we are in a coma. He could do spiritual work of the highest order when in a coma. Only because he had trained his will power to work without his having to keep the pressure, conscious pressure, on the will. But even in our waking state, our will lapses. We sit for meditation, we have some disturbance, some noise, and we stop meditation. "I was disturbed!" Telephone bell rings, we run to the telephone. Let it ring. Now this nonsense of this noise has been going on, does it disturb us? Why not? Because there is a *superior will* which puts you into some sort of a condition where it doesn't disturb, but you have to learn to put this into yourself, by yourself. That is why we have to meditate alone – our daily sadhana. If you cannot train yourself by that, this group satsangh is a waste. It is like a beggar who feeds outside a marriage *pandal* [tent] during the season of marriages here and there; the rest of the year he is starving.

These utsavs, these meetings, they only help us to understand that there is a helping force, an assisting force, a superior force, a superior consciousness which can help us to feel and to do and to achieve what we have to feel, do and achieve by ourselves later. Group training is valuable only if it makes perfect individuals. There is no such thing as a perfect group. Later on when perfect individuals assemble, it will be a perfect group. But now it is a shambles, an assortment – a group of, what shall I say, assorted individuals who must be trained to feel here, to be able to do here, sit for one hour in meditation, no disturbance, and then to repeat this performance at home by dependence on that superior consciousness, the Master's consciousness. Otherwise, all this talk of meditation and constant remembrance is just a story.

"I felt Master's presence," everybody says. How did you feel it? I felt vibration. Now I believe most of these are just wishful thoughts. Unless we are able to feel the Master's presence when he is physically with us, how are you going to feel it when he is not? I have always said and felt and been convinced that the Master comes physically only to make us accustomed to his presence, so that we will continue to feel it when he is not. In some way the physical interplay between the abhyasi and the Master is essential. But it should not become a *dependent* factor, that without his physical presence I cannot do anything. Because people are always asking, "Why, when I am with you, I am able to meditate, but when I am at home I am not able to meditate?" Precisely for this reason.

So it gives a lie to this claim that you felt the Master's presence, isn't it? If it was, you should be going into samadhi every time you sit. There are all these associated problems. Cleaning. What is cleaning? Why is it necessary to do the cleaning? What is the position of a decent human life? "I don't tell lies. I give such *daan* [alms] as I am able to do. Why do I need to meditate?" Average question from an average law-abiding person, shall we say. Then the millionaires who come and say, "I have built sixty-four *dharmashaalas* [rest houses], twenty-two temples, and every day I do poor feeding in six temples in this city. Why should I meditate?" Are we able to answer these questions? And then a sick person who comes who has led a vicious life full of vice and sin – are we able to accept that person with the same equanimity with which you accept millionaires and Brahmins and Kayasths? Instead of sneering at him and saying, "You are a sinner. Now I have to clean you thoroughly." I do not know what is this 'thorough' cleaning.

Many prefects use these words: 'thorough cleaning'. There is either cleaning or there is no cleaning. When you say, "I have to thoroughly clean," it's a wrong usage of a word. If a *dhoti* [cloth worn around the waist] comes back dirty from the *dhobi* [washerman], it only means he has not cleaned it properly – not that he has not cleaned it thoroughly. So, either clean or stop cleaning. We have got into this play of words, fooling ourselves that we are doing good work, and fooling the abhyasi into thinking, or lulling himself into a state where he believes, that he has achieved everything.

Most of all, it is of course something which is despicable to tell lies. Again and again we have to point out that some prefects *do* tell lies. It's unfortunate. Of course most abhyasis consciously or unconsciously tell lies. Let us say they exaggerate – not tell lies. "How long did you meditate?" "One hour." "How do you know?" "Well, it must have been forty minutes at least." Then the son comes and says, "No, papa, you did not do even twenty minutes." "*Chup reh.* [Keep quiet.]" So ten minutes or twelve minutes gets prolonged into sixty minutes by one's own self-deception. You never cheat anybody else. When you lie about what you have to do, you are only lying to yourself. It matters very little to others. [...] If they praise you for sitting one hour in meditation when you have only been sitting twelve minutes in meditation, again you are lying to yourself, cheating yourself. They are not contributory factors. So be truthful; in writing the diary be truthful. If you cannot write the truth in your diary, don't write. After all, you have all read Babuji's autobiography – how truthfully he is able to write, even about such things as passion, to his Master. On one side we say, "Nothing is hidden from you." On the other side we are suppressing facts. They say that with your lawyer and with your doctor there should be no lies. But most of all, between you and your Master there should be no lies. Lawyers and doctors are here for the material life, not for the spiritual life.

The prefects have to realise their moral duties, moral responsibilities towards abhyasis. It is not enough just to say, "You do your cleaning, you do your meditation, Babuji Maharaj will look after the rest." What is 'the rest'? I don't understand – "he will look after the rest" means what? What is this 'rest' about which we are always talking? To my mind there is no 'rest'. There is only meditation and cleaning and constant remembrance. 'The rest' is the other time when we are not meditating or cleaning or doing constant remembrance. But then that is wrong because you are supposed to be doing constant remembrance constantly, all the time; then where is 'the rest'?

So prefects must awaken themselves to a sense of responsibility vis-à-vis their abhyasis. When you take on this job, most of us (I should say, all of us) have done it voluntarily. Nothing has been forced upon anybody. Babuji Maharaj put it in a very subtle and un-frightening way when he talked about power grossness, that one who has accepted this responsibility and does not perform it will be subject to power grossness. That was his way of putting things in a manner which did not frighten us.

But we should ask ourselves: What is this power grossness? Has he not said that one in whom power is unused, it will become solid, it will become a grossness? And power grossness is perhaps the most difficult, or almost impossible, to remove. Have we not read it in the books? Is it not the most dangerous form of grossness? And why can it not be removed by even such a personality as Babuji Maharaj? Precisely because it shows a lack of faith *(bevafaai)*. We accept something and we don't perform; it is an act of lack of faith, breach of faith. Even in civil law, breach of faith is punishable. Here Nature does not permit the cleaning. It says, "Keep quiet, it is none of your business any more. You gave him the permission, you gave him the power, now let me deal with the rest." Here comes the question of 'the rest.' So prefects should be aware of this consequence, possible consequence. Master's mercy is unlimited. But if you have carefully read his autobiography and his other writings, there is a limit to his mercy – not in the sense that his mercy is limited, but because Nature can always come in between and say, "Now it is my domain. You have no authority here to be merciful."

There is always this higher authority, as Babuji Maharaj said, which can intervene. You all know the story of the person whom he was going to raise nine points or twelve points; from above, the voice came: "Stop!" You all know the story of the whole family which was destroyed, which was torturing him in his service. It was not *his* doing. I say this specifically because some western abhyasis have written to me that they are horrified that Babuji could punish such a family. It was not Babuji who punished. Western abhyasis to take note: it was Nature which punished. He, poor fellow, would never punish anybody.

So, we have not to be afraid of the Master. He is ever benevolent, ever smiling, ever merciful, ever sacrificing himself for all our faults. But there is a limit (a *seema*) which we cannot cross, and that is the seema of faith. One who transgresses beyond the boundary of faith has no more call upon the Master's mercy and grace, because we have passed out of his jurisdiction, shall we say. Now it would be foolish philosophy to say, "Is he not Master of the universe? Can he not…?" Well, I don't want to go into all that because only one who is waiting to be punished or fearing to be punished throws himself upon some external mercies. For me the Master is enough.

We should understand that we are working within an enormous, perhaps an infinite, foundation of knowledge, of practice – an infinite blessing, an infinite humanity which perhaps even transcends divinity itself, because divinity having no heart and no mind has no humanity too. But here is a Master who is willing to forgive and forget everything, to take upon himself our burdens. But at one point Nature, Lalaji, God, whatever you want to say, says, "Stop. Now let *me* take over the situation." Then it is difficult. It can be very difficult for us prefects, abhyasis, because as Babuji Maharaj said again and again, "Ingratitude is the highest sin for a spiritual aspirant." One who has received and is not grateful for what he has received, sins in a different way. It is beyond all bodily and mental sins – shall we say, it is an incomparable sin. Nature punishes.

For prefects, breach of faith with the Master – well, power grossness is a very mild term to employ. What can happen? It is too frightening. Because I was told by Babuji himself of one or two cases where he put a soul in the North Pole, pegged it down in the North Pole for a period of ten thousand years for a transgression, for a breach of faith, for an act of, shall we say, utter disregard for the Master's divinity – the ultimate transgression.

So it is not that there is no punishment in Sahaj Marg. Sahaj Marg does not punish, the Master does not punish, but there is an element which can descend as grace during extraordinary occasions like Basant Utsav, or certain occasions outside Basant too, and that same divinity, or the divine flow, can descend as something which will *correct*. To use the word 'punishment' is wrong. It comes to correct. Beware! No more transgressions. You have a right to leave your work, but you have no right to be in it and to not do it. Now this is, shall I say, the cardinal sin of this country itself. Outside spirituality, nobody works. We all take our salaries. We go and sit in our offices; we work thirty minutes, forty minutes, fifty minutes. We can see it in banks; we can see it in any office of the government; we can see it in bus drivers and conductors; you can see it in trains. I mean it's a scandal; the whole thing is a scandal.

This country, above all countries, is known for this free salary. Once you are paid, you acquire a right of being employed. Now you can form unions and fight, and our communist brothers have taught us these things very ably: How to fight for our rights without having to perform our responsibilities. We have always, through the history of India as far as I know it, been living on charity – charity through individuals, charity through organisations, charity through the government. Government employees are 'charitable' persons – they live on charity. Governments are not able to enforce discipline, not able to extract work. So some managers who have the cause of the organisation at heart, they do the work. You know that in banks, only bank managers work nowadays, only officers work; clerical staff never work. They do the minimum. In factories it is the same thing. You punish a worker and there is the *laal jhanda* [red flag] out. So we are not fighting for our rights; we are fighting to be fed without having to work. This is a shame, and unfortunately that ethic, work ethic, we are now bringing into Sahaj Marg. I am only referring to this situation to show its relevance to the spiritual field. Here, too, we want free of all work.

Abhyasis have asked me, or prospective abhyasis have asked me, "Why, if your Master is such a powerful person, a Special Personality who has been given charge of this universe, who can do everything by the blink of an eye, why can he not give us liberation just by looking at us? Why does he want to be so cruel as to put us through a course of sadhana?" I mean it is a serious question they are asking. They say, "Why, when he can give so much, he is denying us this? Why not just look at us and say, '*Mukti ho gayi.* [You are liberated.]'?" Why all this blah, blah, blah of meditation and cleaning and constant remembrance and love and all this nonsense? Some ask – they are the brave people, perhaps the curious people, perhaps the inquirers, who want to really know, but most of us are in that situation. We want it free.

Babuji Maharaj has said, "Spirituality must be free, I am telling you." So we want it free. When he said it is free, he said free of *money*. You don't have to pay for it. Nobody asks you for money for a sitting. As I have said often, on many platforms like this, the only thing free in Sahaj Marg is the transmission – the service that we give to you (prefects). The rest has to be paid for. But for that too, for the sittings, for the transmission, you have to pay ultimately with your *life*. No, I do not mean that you are going to be crucified or burnt at the stake like past saints of the Christian era. When you talk of merger, when you talk of *layavastha,* what is it you are doing but giving your life into his? Are you not losing your life so that you may get his life? Are you not losing yourself so that you become his Self? Is it not a progressive loss, or a giving up, which we call surrender of our self into his care? So is it not, finally and ultimately, giving your *life* into his life? All our life we receive pranahuti, only so that we may be capable of finally offering our *prana* {life} into his prana. That is the final pranahuti, where now my ennobled prana, divinised prana, his prana, goes back into him.

Because progressively, right through our spiritual career, in some way it is like a water tank. You put a hose pipe into it and open the tap; as the fresh water flows, the old water is being progressively taken out. After twenty minutes, half an hour, depending on the size of the tank and the rate of flow, you have a crystal clear tank of water without any effort. Here too, progressively, by his grace, by his effort, because of his enormous love, every single transmission that we receive in some way is replacing our prana with his prana. Otherwise pranahuti is useless. It is only a mere force, a power. And Babuji Maharaj has said, "It is forceless force." No power problem here. No usage of power here.

Therefore, what must it be? It is life itself. Why does he do it? So that by putting his life into me in sitting after sitting, my life becomes changed. The prana, *shakti* {life, energy} if you want to call it that, is totally replaced until one day it is nothing but his prana in me now. The body is what it was; the prana is changed. Now you can say, "Here is a Babuji-ised person." When that happens, my prana wants to go back to him where it belongs. That is the final surrender. Now, it is my pranahuti into my Master. What is wrong with it? So in that sense, eventually at the culminating point of our spiritual search, of our spiritual journey, we shall in some sense cease to exist – not in the sense of annihilation as the westerners put it. "Oh, then I won't be there any more. Then what will I enjoy?" You will be there. Your body will be there. Your consciousness will be there. But your inner self will be there now as the Master's Self. I don't think it is a cheap transaction at all. I think it is the most expensive transaction we have to make: my life for your life.

It is a blessing for those who wish to become like him. It is something to be afraid of for those who want to remain what they are. Now who is going to teach all these things to abhyasis? Why, after three years and four years, they suddenly become afraid and say, "No, I don't want to lose my identity. I will go to this *marg* {path} or that marg. It is our fault. If for any reason an abhyasi leaves this fold after coming into it, it is our fault. It is like a man who comes to your table for lunch and, after eating the first mouthful, decides to leave. It is our fault – something wrong with the food, something wrong in the atmosphere which he cannot tolerate. He goes. There is no use running after him and saying, "Please taste the rest of the food." He says, "When the first bite is like this, what is the rest going to be?"

So it is not a question of telling lies or truth to aspirants and future aspirants. It is a problem of explaining Sahaj Marg exactly, accurately, without your own intellectual play coming into it. The danger is that when we have intellectual prefects, they in some fashion change the teaching to suit their own intellectual predilections. This even the three *acharyas* {teachers} have done: Ramanuja, Shankara, Madhva. They have all done this – each one interpreting the Gita, the Veda, according to his own philosophy. It is twisting something to suit your existing philosophy. Here, if the prefects do it, it only means they have not already conformed to the teaching themselves. Therefore, there is something of the self left in them. Therefore, they want to teach in a way which satisfies *their* self, not the requirements of the abhyasi. This is the problem with the intellectuals.

The simple are too simple to understand the magnificence of this teaching, its beauties, its glory, and so they do what they do when they invite a guest – give him dry roti and some dal. So we have to find a way in between these two extremes. Use the intellectual as a simple man would use it. Simplify, so that he can understand. Yet don't corrupt the teaching, don't pervert the teaching, don't twist the teaching to suit your intellectual predilections. And then you will see the beauty of Sahaj Marg.

We are all talking of growth of the Mission in leaps and bounds. Yes, of course, but it is growing in spite of us. It is growing because there is an enormous thirst in human beings today, to find a way. So they come. We are not attracting. So when they come themselves – like yesterday a young girl walked into this place and said, "I want to start abhyas." Who brought her? She saw the Mission's name there and came. I don't know if she is here today but because of her thirst, her search.... But when they come thirsty, seeking something, is it not our duty to fulfil? Did not Babuji Maharaj say, "Let not anyone who comes to you, go back empty-handed"? Are we sending them away empty-handed, empty-hearted, or are we putting our life into their life? What we receive as transmission from the Master is in turn to be passed on as our life into the hearts of the abhyasis. Are we putting our *life* into this job? When abhyasis talk to other abhyasis, are they putting their life into the effort or are they just making some social nonsense, pretending to speak about Sahaj Marg? "*Aao samosa khaalen. Khaate khaate hum baat kar lenge.* [Come let us eat samosa. While eating we will talk.]"

So, at every level, it is life which has to be poured into the next waiting receptacle. The Master is eternally fulfilling his responsibilities with enormous love, patience, sacrifice. How many prefects do it? They must ask themselves this question. What about the abhyasis who receive the transmission? Are they fulfilling their responsibilities, duties? Because, mind you, it is a duty, it is a responsibility.

Babuji Maharaj said, "You are not here for yourself alone." A water tap does not exist to look shining and nice; it exists to allow water to flow. All that beautiful length of chromium plated piping is not for itself. It is to allow water to flow. We have each one to become conduits of this divine transmission, divine knowledge, divine practice, remembering that what Babuji Maharaj said is the truth, that even the best prefect retains twenty percent for himself, with or without intention. And he said, "Where do you get twenty percent commission? In which business?"

We are always being paid for every bit of work in one way or the other. It is not a payment; it is a gift of his love. He doesn't think of it as payment. When he puts his life into us, he does not feel a loss of life. He feels his life growing inside him because one who gives life, gets life. It is also said in the Bible that he who shall lose his life shall gain it. And he who shall keep his life shall lose it. There is always this reference in esoteric literature that if you strive to keep things for yourself, you shall surely lose it. Spread it, distribute it, and it becomes more and more your own, because Nature is always seeking for an outlet which will be the perfect distributor – no transmission loss. It doesn't exist in the material world. The best medium of light transmission yet only transmits about eighty-five percent of light, eighty-eight, ninety, no more. The best electrical conductors yet have a loss of fourteen percent. Transmission loss, they call it.

Our system too provides for transmission loss. But it is not a loss; it is a transmission gain. Because abhyasis don't lose, the prefect gains; for the Master it is neither a gain nor a loss. It is what it is. It is his life. Like a gardener lives to look at the flowers he grows – admire them, cherish them, love them – the Master exists to admire his products which must grow according to what he has planned. They must become flowers in his garden, not so that he may be proud of his gardening abilities, but it is the satisfaction of a father who looks at his children who have grown up well, who have achieved their purpose in life, as we say, well-established, and such a person can go to sleep when his time comes – happily, contentedly, with a sense of fulfilment of responsibilities. When we deny this fulfilment of his work, we deny him that final peace, that final contentment, that final satisfaction, because unfortunately, here he depends for all these things upon us, upon each one of us, upon the millions that shall come in the future. His future lies with every one of us. Our future lies only with him.

So we have got to awaken abhyasis to the true potentialities of Sahaj Marg, to the true requirements of Sahaj Marg, to the true teachings of Sahaj Marg, and to their responsibility in life – that here we receive to give, not to keep. And lest they be afraid that "once I receive, if I give it away, what will I have?" they must also be told, he who receives and gives shall receive more to give. And the more he gives away, the more he shall get. Ultimately he becomes a divine conduit in which there is no giving and receiving; divinity flows through him. Now divinity has to respect *his* existence, divinity has to respect *his* needs; such a one it may not find again, because Nature itself may not be able to produce such a one again.

Therefore Babuji Maharaj said such personalities are rare. They come once in thousands of years. Why? Because once a medium is stopped, blocked up, unused, Nature takes that much time to create another such person. So in that lies our final loss: we shall lose the medium itself. We shall lose the conduit. The source may be there. What is the use of this source if there is no conduit between the source and my heart? What is the use of all the water in the Ganga if there is no pipe to pipe it down into my bathroom? Isn't it? What is the use of an electricity generating station if there is no power connection into my house? If I don't pay my bills, if I don't use it properly, I am cut off. Now the individual being cut off is not such a tragedy, but that the source should cut off the medium of transmission into us because of its disgust with humanity which is unwilling to recognise the presence of such a potentiality, make use of such a potentiality for ennobling itself, for growing into the Ultimate divinisation.... Nature says, "Let me wait. Humanity is not yet ready for this." For Nature there is no time.

As I was joking with some children in Madras, "Suppose you make an appointment with the sun that it shall rise at sunrise tomorrow morning, what will the sun say?" The sun will say, "What is sunrise? Please explain to me." Can the sun know sunrise and sunset? But we say, "I shall meet you at sunrise. Birds go to sleep at sunset." So, we cannot make dates with divinity or with destiny. We have the opportunity of doing it now. If you don't do that, the next opportunity will only be at Nature's choice, not ours. For those of us who are willing to do it now, here, as Babuji said, "Here and now," the door is ever open. But for those who say, "Let it wait," they will have to wait for Nature's best opportunity which Nature will decide – ten thousand years hence, a hundred thousand years hence, tomorrow, who knows.

It is wisdom to grasp this opportunity when it is available. It is wisdom to use that opportunity wisely, properly, *responsibly* above all, with a sense of responsibility which is truly, sadly lacking. Spirituality is not to be treated as something like a game. Spirituality is not an enterprise of success and no success. Spirituality is not something in which we indulge to please the Master. Spirituality is not even for your growth. It is what it is. It is to make human beings of us, then noble human beings, purposeful human beings, divinised human beings who will take up each one [inaudible] to act as perfect individuals for the future of the race. So this is an enormous vista of possibilities, horrifying to those who cannot handle responsibility in their lives, delightful to those who are awaiting such opportunities, the perfect opportunity for those who are bold and courageous enough to say, "Yes, I am prepared for it."

Therefore Babuji Maharaj said, "One lion is better than five hundred sheep." Sheep exist to eat. We have to take them out even to feed. We need a shepherd, but no lion has ever been led into the jungle by another person. It goes, feeds for itself, looks after itself. So our prefects must become self-supporting in the sense that, having truly absorbed the teaching – not just learnt it with their intellect but having absorbed it, made it a part of themselves – they teach with an utter naturalness what he taught so utterly, naturally. We get naturally; we must teach naturally. We must grow naturally. We must allow others to grow naturally, and in this way – naturally, naturally, naturally at each step – Nature's chain of progression from the past into the future will be kept unbroken.

So this is what I would emphasise again and again, that abhyasis must understand that it is not only wealth that is transmitted from father to son and then from son to his son – of that we are very familiar, and with which we are so avariciously linked. "When will my father's wealth come to me?" Some of us are even crude enough to enforce that the father makes a will before there is even any chance of his death. "Please do it, father. Why wait till you are going to die?" And you must know how that breaks the father's heart. This is not by any means a rare phenomenon. It is too frequent because of our *laalach* [greed], not knowing that the father can give to nobody but his son. It is only when the father has no son to give to that he is compelled to give to others.

So, if ever Sahaj Marg becomes something of an export commodity which we have to get back, about which Babuji warned us several times, "I hope that like everything else, this too will not slip away into the West...." I must remind you of a letter that I got soon after Babuji's Mahasamadhi and my succession to his post was announced. One gentleman from Allahabad, I think, wrote to me and he said, "Sir, while I am pleased that you are his successor, I am also a bit sad because once again there is something which has come up in the North which has been sent away to the South."

Let it not go out of the bounds of this country. Let the teaching go, let the practice go, let divinity go outside, but let not the torch itself go out. This is our biggest responsibility.

Thank you.

7

Seeds of Infinite Potential

First of all, I would like to assure Mr Ishwar Prasad that I am also nervous every time I have to speak! I mean, I have said this so often. I say this not just to raise a laugh, but out of experience I find that when you are able to come to grips with the nervousness, the nervousness may still be there but it does not affect us any more. Then actually the nervousness becomes a help.

You see, when people deal with snakes and tigers and lions in the zoos, initially I suppose they were all afraid of those animals and reptiles. Slowly they became more and more familiar with the animals. But if at any stage they lose that basic understanding that, there is an animal and here is a man and anything can go wrong at any particular moment, then they will certainly get killed. So, the natural fear of a lion helps, even if you are an animal trainer, because in the background of the mind there is always this thought that you must be cautious. You are a

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4 March 1992, New Delhi, India

human being. You know what to love, how to love; that animals cannot speak; that they are trained with extreme difficulty and patience. At the same time, in the corners of your mind there is this idea that the animal cannot reciprocate in every way that you do. So the animal trainer is a wary person – wise, patient but wary person. Therefore he outlives the lion. If he thinks the lion is a dog, then one day the lion will show him that it is not – much to his disadvantage and perhaps his permanent loss. Therefore a little nervousness is always good. It keeps us cautious; it keeps us on the rails as it were. It makes us think so that we are able to produce whatever we can at that moment, in the best way that we can.

It is like a wife at home – suddenly she is confronted with half a dozen guests. It is a poor wife who will say, "I cannot do anything now." A good housewife will always turn out something, even if it is only some *uppuma* or some toast. So a little nervousness coupled with a lot of courage, a lot of faith, helps us to produce quite a great deal out of virtually nothing.

I often wonder in this story of the *akshaya patra* [inexhaustible vessel] – Lord Krishna's akshaya patra – that will never empty, it seems that there had to be at least one grain of rice in it before even Lord Krishna could produce food for thousands from it. You find the same story in the Bible about two loaves and five fishes. *That* Christ could multiply, but he could not create those two loaves and five fishes.

In speaking it is the same problem. If you have one thought in your head and you start with that thought, you can do anything. But when you are worried, "Oh, I have only one thought. How long will this last?" – it is like the farmer who has seeds in his bag, but says, "What will I do if I put this seed in the ground and nothing happens?" He will not get anything. Each seed becomes a plant, which will produce many fruits, which will produce many, many more seeds. So Babuji Maharaj teaches us to use a seed thought which will grow and grow and, like a tree, it branches and we do not know in which direction the next branch will go. It is really fascinating, I have found this when I begin to speak, because I start somewhere, like a tree growing up; I branch off in all sorts of directions and yet somehow find at the end that I have reached a satisfactory conclusion. So we have to have faith that when I have a seed thought, it will grow because it is a seed. Ready made is no use.

This ashram, if people had seen it some years back, the land was [illegally] occupied by all sorts of people – I don't know how many families – twenty, thirty families, *jhopdis* [huts] [inaudible]. Our people were in despair. "How can we vacate them? How can we take possession of this land? Will it be possible at all given the political atmosphere in this country?" So many problems. But when they went ahead with faith and courage, it was possible. After all, you must remember: what appears to be a very dark night, you can penetrate with just one single pen light torch; that is enough. You don't need the headlights of a car or the light of a locomotive. One single flashlight with one single AAA cell in it is enough. How much light do you need to go in the dark? If you insist that it should be daylight before you will do anything, that the sun must shine for you, nothing will happen.

You have a right to ask for light – enough light to give you six inches of space on the earth to walk by. That a candle will provide, that a flashlight will provide. God made the sun so that there may be light. Perhaps man showed more ingenuity by creating candles and flashlights and so saving on a lot of energy. In nature, you find there is enormous wastage of energy. It would be futile to say, "The sun is wonderful." Of course it is wonderful. I see people sitting in the sun, the Europeans when they first come. They are like cats; they find the most comfortable spot in the best part of the sunlight and they will occupy it unless you throw them out. The only thing that will bring them in here is meditation. Otherwise they would be on top of the roof, too, sunning themselves. Now, that is the attitude of the cat: to find the best place, to find the best comfort, to find the greatest warmth. Nothing wrong, because they [Europeans] obey the call and come in for meditation. Now, suppose they did not come for meditation, then they are wasting their lives.

So we have to really discover in ourselves the seeds that God has already put in us, Nature has already put in us, we by our samskaras have already created in ourselves. We are full of seeds. Even children are created by such seeds. Isn't it? Where do the children come from? From the seeds that we already have in us. How did they get there? Did God come and open us up and put the seeds into it? Not at all. How did the blood in our circulatory system come? Did we go to a hospital when we were babies and have ourselves filled up with blood? Not at all. From a tiny cell which is conceived, we can grow up into one metre eighty-seven, one metre ninety, and yet our bodies are full of blood. Our bones are strong enough to support us. There is seed in us for future generations to come up. Do you think our mind can be empty? Can our Nature, or our God, or our own selves be so stupid as to fill up physical systems but not the mental system and, most importantly, the spiritual system?

Is it not faith in ourselves that we lack, when we don't have faith in the Master or God? I would suggest that faith in God is nothing more than faith in your own self. If I have the blood in my veins and my arteries and if my heart can beat without a pump from the moment of... I don't know when the heart really starts beating. It is said that even the foetus in the womb is beating its heart. Till death there is no pump, there is no artificial stimulation required. It goes on beating, dub-dub, dub-dub, dub-dub – sixty years, seventy years, eighty years, a hundred and twenty years, as long as you live. Why should we imagine that my mind is not so full of brilliant thoughts, that I have only to use one seed at a time and create a magnificent tree of thought, thought forms, thought contents, wisdom, philosophy, knowledge, instruction?

So we have to develop this faith in ourselves. Ultimately, if you come to think of it in another way, spirituality is perhaps nothing but an exercise where you go to someone you call a guru or a master or a guide, learn to develop faith in him, and by making him part of yourself, develop that faith in yourself which is *the thing* that is necessary. It is no use having faith in the Master if you cannot develop that faith in yourself, too. I would suggest that the development of faith in yourself, confidence in yourself, is an indication of how much faith you have in your Master – not vice versa. Because people who have nothing to do, who are not able to do anything, who are still as they were twenty years back, claim they have faith in the Master but the Master has done nothing for them.

"I have been with Babuji twenty years. Today, still, I am the same as I was. I am afraid. What should I do?" How is it possible that you have faith in the

Master and have no faith in yourself? Did not Babuji develop faith in himself through extraordinary faith in his Master, Lalaji Maharaj? Is the Master, the idea of the Master, not anything more than a thought, a feeling, which helps you to develop into that which you must become? If your Master is wise, you must become wise. If he is strong, you must become strong. If he is spiritual, you must become spiritual. Now the physical things you cannot change. I cannot now collapse into some size approaching Babuji Maharaj. I am too big for it, my skeleton is too big. I cannot reduce my *physical* size. So the physical resemblance to the Master is not possible. That is fixed by nature. But what about the rest? What about the mental resemblance? What about the spiritual resemblance? The mind has no fixed limits. The fact that anybody can be educated proves that every mind is capable of being educated.

You pick up *a rikshawala's* [rickshaw-puller's] son and put him in a different environment, he will become what he is in that environment. You put him in a king's palace, he will become a prince. You have the story of Karna to prove that it is possible. Son of a charioteer! If he had remained nothing but the son of a charioteer, he would have been driving a chariot for another of those Kauravas or the Pandavas. But he had an indomitable spirit and eventually he rose up to be one of the foremost warriors in those times.

Education, faith, indomitable courage, a will which cannot be shaken, a purpose from which you cannot be swerved or swayed – without these things there is no success. So, while physical resemblance to the Master is perhaps impossible except in very, very rare cases, there is no doubt that any abhyasi of the Master can become like him in the mind. There is absolutely no doubt that he can become like him in spiritual life. Otherwise this whole thing is a farce. Otherwise Babuji is a liar; Lalaji is a liar; all the saints of India are liars; God Himself is a liar. All this talk of spirituality, divinisation, supreme human beings – all is a blatant lie. But we have examples through history to prove that it was possible; it has been possible; it is still today possible.

Now, when we think, "No, no, only one or two can become like that," it is like saying, "I have a whole sack full of seeds of rice or wheat but only two will germinate out of them." Why? If I have a bag full of seeds, one hundred kilograms of seeds, don't I expect to plant twenty acres out of that and to get maybe two thousand bags of wheat or rice at the end of my venture? If that is the case with seeds, what about the seeds of the Master himself? Because Babuji Maharaj said he *seeds* our hearts. And if the seed does not grow, whose problem is it? Whose failure is it? He not only plants the seed but he is nurturing it, he is watering it daily, giving it life with his transmission, keeping the environment clean by removing all the unnecessary complexes, as he calls them, from our minds and from our system, removes the grossness. And yet if it does not grow, whose fault is it?

There may be failure in the physical field because physical powers are limited. I cannot walk ten kilometres in one hour. I may not even be able to walk ten kilometres. I may not be able to run at all now. I cannot climb up more than three pairs of staircases. Physical limitation is physical limitation; it cannot be changed. Physically we can fail, because physically we are limited. Mentally, why should we fail? If Babuji was capable of giving us fantastic thoughts, fantastic messages which we are remembering from day one, should we not try to emulate his thought, follow his way of thinking, follow his simplicity – simplicity of presentation, simplicity of approach? Should we not try? Because in the mental field there is no limitation. The cause of failure is our own supposition, induced by fear, induced by complexes, that I don't want to stand up and make a fool of myself.

There is no other inhibiting factor than the ego. The ego says, "Be careful, one hundred people are listening, five hundred people are listening, two thousand people are listening. Be careful of what you are going to say, because if you fail you will be a laughing stock." So what? Suppose the seed in the ground says, "Suppose I should come out and be a shrunken tree and I will have no fruit… Let me be in the ground." What will you think of it? What would the agriculturist feel? Suppose your child remains at the age of three even though it is twenty-seven, what do you do? Are you not sad that "My child, which had so much promise, which has so much beauty, so much of our love, yet will not grow up." I am not now talking of disease-induced phenomena like brain damage and things like that. I am talking of a normal child which regresses into itself precisely because it is afraid of the environment, it cannot go out, it cannot speak to people. What would you think of such a child? "You are my child. Go out and see, nothing will happen."

I always admired the way Sikhs bring up their children. You know, a child of six in a Sikh family is worth fifteen adults in the Hindus. And what is the difference? It is the difference in training. A Sikh father will say, "*Jaa, sher de puttar hai tussi.* [Go, you are the son of a lion]." And to our children we say, 'No, no, don't go in the dark. Don't go up the tree. Don't go into the water. Don't go out in the sunlight." Where should that child go? The Sikhs are a great people. I love their courage, their children; it may be brash, it may be bravado but it works. I remember my days of college in Calcutta, when one Sikh conductor in a bus could put to shame hundred Bengalis. They would stand twenty feet away at a safe distance and shout at him and he would just say, "Come on, let me see who comes first," and nobody had the guts to come near him! This is the sort of courage that we need to infuse. But our children grow up weak, infantile, stupid; no courage – no courage by day, even less by night. Now when such a child grows up, are we not ashamed?

So you see, that is *my* seed, therefore I am so worried about my son. The gardener is worried about his plantation because those are *his* seeds. He has sown them. He has watered them. He has removed the weeds. And what about the Master? What about the seeds he has sown? Is he not also a gardener waiting to see his plantation come up, his garden yield fruit – lion producing lions. Even a lion cub can terrify a whole flock of sheep. You don't have to be a grown-up lion. A single lion cub will hold at bay any number of other animals. So, we are a shameful lot when we cannot rise up to these occasions. Shameful, not because we don't display what we have, but because we don't allow the hidden talents and strengths in us to display themselves. "What is there to display?" We keep them hidden because we are afraid to expose it, lest we fail.

Now what is the use of being afraid? It's like a man with three acres of gardens, twenty bags of seeds and not willing to plant them because in case nothing comes up, his neighbour will laugh at him. So the neighbour says, "What are you doing with your three acres?" "*Nahin, nahin, padaa rahega.* [No, no, let it be there.] There is no worry about food. I have enough money." What would you think of such a fellow?

So, it is not a question of creating and being creative. I don't agree with this idea that a man or woman *becomes* creative. Every one of us is creative because we have the *seed* in us which Nature has created, God has created. All that we are able to do is to inhibit the growth of those seeds by fear, by not planting them, by not using the seeds, and they remain like the seeds in the Pharaohs' tombs, useless to anybody. And remember, these seeds can be used at any time. When I read that grains of wheat removed from the Pharaohs' tombs after three thousand years were yet able to germinate – see the enormous potential that lies hidden in a seed! Over the span of three thousand years it is still there, waiting for an opportunity to germinate, to blossom, to fruit.

I believe that we go through these cycles of rebirth again and again and again only because we don't allow these seeds to come up to their potential, and therefore the seed will remain in us until we allow them to germinate and flower and become something blessed for everybody to see. We don't have to be creative. All that we have to do is to remove our fear and our egoistic attachment to results and then you will see the splendour that can come out of everyone here; everyone can become what is a speaker, you see. Even these things are called speakers which are magnifying our voice. What is a speaker? If we are all praising the cuckoo (the *koel*) for its beautiful music, is the koel watching to see who is clapping or who is criticising? It sings because it cannot help singing. Does the sunflower in the garden blush to see who is looking at it? It is glorious in itself. It does not need praise. It is nature's product. It says, "I am" – that's all. And God also says, "I am." What? Nothing.

So, spirituality must at least help us to remove this fear, knowing that in me, in every one of us, is the absolute apex of creation's products. When we say we are already perfect, we have only to realise that perfection, it means there is no growing into perfection, no having to become perfect, but only to remove all the – what Babuji said – veils that are covering it (the *aavaranas* that are covering it), the ignorance and the fear that are covering it, and when you remove this – there it is – the splendour of God himself.

So it is not so much a question of *producing* something, as of *removing* something. I have often spoken of a sculpture where you take a bit of rock and you chip away and chip away and chip away until there is something left and that is your product. Now given a piece of rock, infinite forms are lying hidden in it. It depends on you which you are going to bring out. All that you are doing is to chip away what is unnecessary to the beautiful form that your mind has conceived as lying there in it. Another artist would conceive of a different form, and he would chip away the rock in a different sense, but every artist, every sculptor does nothing but remove the super – what shall we say – deposits, deposition of rock which is covering up the form that he perceives in that bit of rock or marble or metal. This is creation.

Creation means really, to my mind, removing unnecessary things. The necessary things are already in us. God gave us the tools that we need: the hands and the legs, a digestive system, a circulatory system to keep us going; a reproductive system to see that the future of the race keeps going; a heart full of courage, unfortunately dimmed by feelings of guilt and fear and shame; and a spiritual fire that burns within all of us through eternity. Therefore, rebirth is not a punishment. It is a Pharaoh's tomb in which the seeds are lying hidden in the darkness and until the doors are opened and the tomb is removed, the seeds will persist. Therefore, it is the *persistence* of life waiting to be unveiled, waiting to be revealed in all its divinity and splendour that makes us be reborn again and again. When we are able to do that in the final life which can be this life as Babuji Maharaj said, "When that splendour is revealed, when God's purpose is fulfilled, Nature's purpose is fulfilled, *your* purpose is fulfilled, then where are you?"

So, these are some thoughts, stray thoughts, affecting our spiritual progress which must guide us, which must give us the very final and conclusive faith that faith in the Master is faith in myself. I cannot have faith in the Master without having faith in myself. In the beginning, yes, I go to a master because I have no faith in myself. Like a teacher – I go to a teacher to be taught but then I find that I have already known all these things. The teacher only helps me to find out that I know it. You can always see when you are teaching children that they come out with this remark, "Yes but, Mummy, I know this – 'D-E-E-P', 'deep'," and the mother says, "Then why didn't you say so in the beginning?"

We have to help the Master to uncover these things and to reveal to us the potentiality, the divine potentiality that rests in each one of us. We create nothing, he creates nothing. In that sense God creates nothing, too. God is expressing Himself, His divinity, *through* His creation. Like an artist expresses his creativity through whatever he creates: paintings, sculptures, gardens, buildings.

Today somebody remarked that when they thought of this ashram first in the plan, they couldn't make head or tail of it, but today they see what a wonderful structure it has become. Everything is like that in the beginning. You marry and your life looks very forbidding. Suddenly you have acquired responsibilities, a wife, and you know that there are going to be additions to that responsibility – joyful additions but troublesome responsibilities. How am I going to bring them up? In that sense you will find the idea of a receding goal is a natural idea. When you have no wife you think three hundred rupees is enough. You marry, you want six hundred rupees. The first child comes, you want a thousand rupees; second child, two thousand; third child, college education, a car, a bigger house.

So, what is a goal? Can it ever be fixed? I mean it is ridiculous to talk of a fixed goal because except in space nothing is fixed. Delhi is a fixed goal but it is in space, but happiness is not a fixed goal because it is nowhere in space, not even in time. Where do you locate happiness? In tomorrow? Back in yesterday? Where is it? It is where you find it, when you find it. Similarly this spiritual goal is where you find it, when you find it. And where are those 'wheres' and 'whens'? Babuji said, "Here and now."

Now who is to make that possible? Well, the answer is obvious. If I think of the goal as far away in space and even farther away in time... It took Lalaji seven years or seven months, Babuji twenty-two and a half years, somebody else seven years, somebody else ten years. We say, "How do we know when it will be possible?" There is no fixed time. So we are a little puzzled: Is it possible at all? "Sir, if even Babuji took twenty years, don't you think I should take sixty-six?" That is wrong thinking. I started life, let us say, at fifty rupees a month and ended at five hundred rupees but today my son starts at eight hundred and fifty and will end at probably twenty thousand. His son may start somewhere at sixteen thousand and end at two lakhs. There is no limit to these things.

Our forefathers planted rice and got, let us say, three bags per acre. Our parents got thirty. Today, with increased technology and proper application, you can get three hundred – the same field, the same seeds. So in spirituality there is no limit, because there is no field but only the seed. What is the field? It is such as you can create. There is no fixed field, therefore no fixed qualities, no fixed attributes. The seed is his. I am the field. Each one of us is a field. And what can he put into that field? Well, I have to create the field. What is this idea of expansion of consciousness, for instance? That a limited consciousness, limited to my own physical existence, my own physical needs and pleasures, eventually is able to expand to cover the entire universe. Then what will the seed produce in such a plantation? You can imagine you see. Every farmer in Punjab knows that if he had one *bigha* [measure of land], he can produce so much; if he had thirty bighas, he could produce so much; and if he had the whole world for his farm, how much could he produce? Therefore we have to become the proper fields – each one of us a universal field where a single seed from the Master, from Nature, from Divinity, will produce a universal crop. This can be another way in which you can look at the idea of universal love, for instance. Because there is always this idea of difficulty in understanding – "Does 'universal' mean loving everybody in the universe?" It is not like that. The sun is a universal light; it can shine everywhere at all times. My torch or my candle can only shine for me – coming back to that idea, the analogy. Therefore, the candle and the flashlight are limited to helping me; the universal light burns for everybody.

Similarly, when we become universally expanded or expanded throughout the universe, my consciousness becomes expanded throughout the universe, then everything in me fills up the universe. What began as a small human love in a tiny human heart, full of fear and frustration now becomes an *enormous* love, capable of filling the whole universe. So, it is only expansion of consciousness that can make divine love possible, universal love possible – not human *effort*. We cannot go around and shake hands and say, "I love you, I love you." It is not going to get us anywhere; only pain in the biceps. But for that I must be willing to expand my field. I must be willing to help *him* to expand my field. In that there must be no fear, in that there must be no idea that while I can plant and grow three acres of crop, I am not capable of handling thirty acres.

People often wonder how a prime minister rules a country. Well, if you can handle a small company with ten people and if you can handle a bigger company after five years with three hundred people and thirty times the capital, what is the difficulty about handling a whole country? I see nothing but a growth in scale. We are afraid, therefore, of growth in scales. When we are afraid of the growth in scale, we limit ourselves. Now Nature says it cannot stop – either you go up or you go down. Therefore, when we stop growing, we start contracting. So, all these are natural laws and the only way of upsetting Nature's apple cart is to grow in the opposite direction of growth, which is also its original purpose, continuing purpose, always it is his purpose. So please make use of all the seeds in you lying unused, full of the ultimate potential. Take them up one by one, plant them and see what you can produce.

Thank you.

8

Fulfil the Divine Plan

Dear brothers and sisters,

It is of considerable interest to recall that Sahaj Marg began in Madras in North Madras. When I joined the Mission in 1964 there was no centre at all in the south. There was one somewhere here (I don't know where exactly), perhaps in Tondiarpet, where there used to be one prefect, and there were probably three or four abhyasis. Babuji Maharaj has visited his house once and stayed there.

It must have been in one of these *galis* (lanes), because I was told it was a very dirty place and Babuji had a lot of difficulty climbing up the wooden stairs – a hot house, not very sanitary conditions; in fact, very undesirable from all angles, but yet that is where Sahaj Marg began. I think it was Tondiarpet or Tiruvottiyur – I'm not quite sure. It was a gentleman called Mr Mudaliyar who was the first prefect here – CMT Mudaliyar. I don't remember to have met him

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because he never participated in the satsangh after we started in the south.

Another interesting feature is that Mr Mudaliyar was passing through Shahjahanpur. He got off one train, went to Babuji for one hour and took another train two hours later – and in that period he was made a prefect. He became an abhyasi and a prefect at the same time!

So you see in what way Sahaj Marg began. Then many years later there used to be one Marwari gentleman – I don't remember his name now. I had accompanied Dr Varadachari to his house to have a meeting in North Madras. That was probably in the year 1966 – '66 or '67. So the original centre was supposed to have begun here somewhere in 1964. In '66 we had a meeting in Mr Agarwal's house and you will find the lecture of Dr Varadachari published in that book, *Lectures on Sahaj Marg.* After that, it is now only in '92 that we are coming to North Madras. After '68, '67, '68, twenty-five years have gone – a whole quarter of a century. One wonders what North Madras was doing all these years.

Unfortunately there was never any response because this is all a business community, people who are more interested in material life, material ambitions, material goals; spirituality would be the last. You know, in India, we have this funny tradition that when a child is born we have a lot of ritualistic pujas and worship. When a man is dead, again there's a lot of ritualistic nonsense. In between, there is often a big gap, a vacuum. When we believe more in education, more in matrimonial bliss, more in material welfare and money, this is exemplified in the four stages of human life: *brahmacharya, gribastha,* [*vanaprastha, sannyasa,* i.e., student life, household life, forest life, ascetic life].

So even the Shastra seems to relegate spirituality to the end, when you are finished with everything – not in the sense that "We've had enough, now let us stop," but when we have no more ability to do anything in any field – we cannot eat, we cannot enjoy, no ice cream, no milk – then you go to spirituality. That is, we go there toothless, sightless, unable to hear, unable to speak, unable to walk, being led by the hand by somebody else to guruji, and there, falling at his feet, not even able to talk and saying, "Please save me. I'm on my last legs. I don't know when I will pass away. Please save me." And the guru is supposed to save him and immediately grant him liberation!

In Hinduism we have several of these funny ideas, that *we* don't have to do anything, *he* does everything. We don't have to do everything all our lives, but he will do everything in one instant at the time of death. *Kamadhenu, kalpataru, akshaya patra* [wish-fulfilling bovine, the tree of plenty, inexhaustible vessel] – three concepts where, without doing anything, without earning anything, without even lifting your little finger as we say in English, you can take all the benefits of life and then expect to get liberation *(moksha)* as a gift from God.

Now those of you who have been in Sahaj Marg long enough will understand that Sahaj Marg opposes, philosophically speaking, each and every one of these concepts. Here, sadhana is a continuing, lifelong process. It is neither at birth nor at death; it has to be right through, from day one when we begin, to day 'x' when we are to be carried on the shoulders of four sturdy people.

Here there is no grace in the sense that we can beg for it. Babuji Maharaj has said, "Be deserving." Here we have to work for it all our life – not just in the morning and the evening and at night, but throughout the twenty-four hours of the day. Sadhana is not to be confined to morning meditation, evening cleaning, night prayer. That is a process, you see. It is like eating is a process but then the digestion must go on inside. How long does digestion take? Four hours, five hours, six hours. Then you are ready for the next meal.

So here, as we understand the process, there are three things to do: morning meditation, evening cleaning, night prayer; it is like eating. Constant remembrance must develop so that we can digest all this. Through digestion we absorb what we have taken in. You know there are cases where people eat and they don't absorb anything; what goes in comes out and they get emaciated, they become like skeletons. Because if you don't absorb what you have taken, there is no use in taking it at all.

So meditation without absorbing the transmission received through further meditation is a waste. So people are always asking for sittings. Sittings from a prefect, we have said, once a month – normally. If you need more, the prefect must say, "Please come again." We should not have to ask for it. So once a month it is your duty to ask for an individual sitting. More than that if you need, it is the prefect who has to tell you, "You need more sittings."

I find there is only *laalach* [greed]. People are always anxious to have individual sittings but they are not wanting to do their daily sadhana. They say, "What is this nonsense?" People have even asked me, "If Lalaji was such a great personality, if Babuji was such a great personality, why are they pestering us and bothering us with all this nonsense of daily meditation? What is the need to sit every morning and every evening and every night? When Babuji said, 'Lalaji, with the blink of an eye, could liberate a person,' why not he blink that eye of his and liberate us?"

Now what liberation they are talking of, they themselves don't know. They want to be liberated from effort, from sadhana. I have been convinced through, I don't know – what? – twenty-seven, twenty-eight years now, that nobody really wants liberation, in the sense of spiritual liberation, because we have become attached to this worldly life. We will have liberation when we are dead. We don't want liberation while we are alive because the fear is there that suppose I'm liberated and I have to go, how can I leave all these beautiful things I've acquired? How can I leave my family, my children, my hobbies?

So you see, people want... this is something like an insurance policy which matures at death. It's a protection. We are using sadhana like an insurance policy, that "My Lord, don't liberate me until the end comes. You are merciful, you are God. If you can extend my life and then liberate me – much better, but if my life is short, liberate me in any case when I'm dead. For heaven's sake, don't liberate me before."

If you see in your hearts, I don't think anybody will have the courage to say no to this. We all want liberation under *our* condition. "After I have married my children off, after I am useless even to myself, after I have seen the children of my children of my children married and established in life; *then* you liberate me, it is good. Because I have no other alternative. Now there is nothing more I can do here. This life has become a burden." He can hardly move his body around, what to talk of pleasures. Now he says, "Please liberate me."

So we want to go like a cow which has dried up to the butcher's shop – not when it is giving milk, not when it is still a cow, but when it is useless to everybody, when its flesh is no more there – only skin hanging on bones. Whereas Shastra says, "Go to your Lord like a bride, in the fullness of your youth, in the fullness of your strength, in the fullness of your beauty, with all your capacities intact, capable of doing everything that you have to do." Then the Lord will accept. But if you go toothless, senile, no eyes, no ears, no nose, all the *panchendriyas* [five senses] dead; if, like you see in many *sannyasis*' [ascetics'] homes, you are carried on a litter to the sannyasi's feet, almost as if you are dead, the sannyasi will say, "*Theek hai* [all right]. Leave him there."

So when you go to your Master, to your Maker, to your Creator, you must go as something which is still useful, which is still usable, which is still worth having. We must look on him as the ultimate Master, the *purusha* [the Original Personality]. Am I fit for him? Will he smile at me when he looks at me or will he turn away his head with revulsion? "Who is this stinking, rotting old fellow? Why have they brought him here? For heaven's sake!"

Our temples, our religious systems, are like our hospitals. In India we don't take people to hospital when they can still be cured. We wait because we're afraid of hospitals. Similarly we are afraid of temples. We are afraid of Puranas, we are afraid of Shastras, we are afraid of God himself. Fear of God – not love of God.

We have to understand Sahaj Marg sadhana correctly: no philosophy; no theory; only practice.

Practice means like you go for tennis every day, swimming every day, golf every day, here also it is daily. Like you have your tennis clubs where all tennis players meet, we have our meditators' club where we meet every day. We meet, we exchange notes, we profit by each others' experiences and meditate. I mean, you don't go to a swimming club to just sit around the pool and talk to other people. You go there to swim. You go to a tennis club to play tennis. Here you must come to meditate.

So meditation is very serious. It may be simple but it is very serious. That it is a simple system, *sahaj* {natural} system, does not mean it is not a serious system. Many simple things are of the utmost seriousness. God is simple, Babuji says, but He is a very serious Person. He is the creator, the preserver, the destroyer, everything in one. When He creates, He creates with hope. When He preserves, He preserves with the expectation that things will change, and what He has preserved will be worth preserving. When He destroys, He destroys because now there is no more hope for what He has created and preserved, so He destroys so that he may create anew. This is the individual *pralaya* {destruction}. This will be the cosmic pralaya. This will be the super cosmic pralaya also.

So, in the fulfilment of his plans alone is possible such benign grace as God can give, being showered upon us. If we fulfil his purpose, our future is certain. He will continue to create more like us. He will continue to protect us and preserve us for all time, which is what you call *mukti* (liberation). If not, the pralaya comes, destruction comes, of an individual, of a world, of the universe itself, and then it is recreated.

Why should there be this idea of pralaya being followed by a new creation? I mean it's not a joke. Even God is not so childish as to make and destroy and to make again and to destroy again. So it is implicit in this idea of a creation followed by a preservation, followed by a destruction (a cataclysmic destruction which you call the pralaya), that because it has now come to such a stage where God himself cannot use that creation, it goes and He creates anew.

I daresay that if human beings behave themselves, fulfil divine plans, there will not be any more pralayas also – not individual, not cosmic, not the universal, because there is no need for a pralaya. I am not going to destroy a house which is good and going to give me happiness. When it is no more suitable to me, when it is leaking everywhere, when the windows are rattling, when the walls are threatening to fall over my head, it is time to pull it down and to build a new house.

So Babuji Maharaj used to say that the human will is one of the most potent and powerful things in creation because, rightly applied, applied altogether by all human beings everywhere, God's plans can be changed. We are only talking in a futile, childish, human manner when we say I am going to change *my* plans. Who is bothered about your plans? He is bothered about His plans.

We are units of performance in that cosmic, super cosmic divine plan. Like you take out one IC which is not performing and replace it by another. And these integral chips or integrated chips, they cost very little – two rupees, three rupees each, but they are vital to performance because there is so much {inaudible} in those chips: so much information, so much capacity, so much computational capacity. If it goes wrong it is thrown away.

I think each human being is something like one IC in the cosmic or divine computers, and on its proper functioning depends the functioning of the total. We are not just some insignificant chip of silicon somewhere. Each and every one of us is a vital component in that cosmic divine plan – vital in the sense that by one failure, the total failure can be ensured, whereas one performing perfectly does not ensure the performance of all.

Therefore, the need to enlarge satsangh, to carry this message to more and more people, to make people participate in meditation for their self-development so that as they proceed on the path of self-development towards this idea of perfection, and as each and every individual becomes a perfect performing unit in this cosmic plan, His computer gets more and more completely built. And when that happens, what is going to happen? We shall all see.

So this is the need, you see, for individual performance, for individual perfection, for individual divinisation. Not for your own self, though you are the beneficiary; for me and for Him, too. And when we forget Him and do it only for ourselves, it is selfish, it is self-centred, it is individual and therefore he says, "All right, if it is only for you, you do it for yourself. Success or failure is your problem." But when we do it with the idea that what I am will be His, then His help comes in total measure. Our progress is no more dependent now on our effort – He helps. In fact He raises up because now He is satisfied that this fellow is working not for himself but for me.

I would like all abhyasis to understand this spiritual configuration that an individual component must be perfect, so that the total *ensemble,* as the French say, must be perfect. Unless the individual component is perfect the whole machine cannot be perfect. Any imperfection, as they say in the proverb, 'The strength of a chain is in its weakest link.' All the other links may be very powerful, very strong, a hundred tonnes; but the weak link, if you can pull it apart, the chain is gone.

Therefore, our attention must go to the weaker sections of humanity because they are the weakest links in this cosmic chain, in this divine chain. Therefore, this organisation cannot be elitist, it cannot be exclusive. It cannot be only for the rich, the talented, the educated, the well-off, the bright, the brilliant, because unless the weakest links are strengthened, the strength of the strongest link is meaningless.

You see this in society. If a society exists where eighty percent are under the poverty line or above the poverty line, as they say, the rich cannot exist. One day they will be destroyed. We have seen these revolutions in history time and again when kingdoms have been overthrown, emperors have been decapitated, royal families have been decimated, because the strength of the strong becomes the weakness if they have not seen that the weak also become strong like them.

This is the ultimate socialism – not the political socialism or the Russian brand of socialism (communism), where the strong is made weak so that now you have a weak chain where all the links are weak. Spirituality believes in a different kind of socialism where the weak are made stronger and stronger so that the chain becomes stronger and stronger. Ultimately this chain becomes absolutely unbreakable. You can pull a whole universe by that chain.

You know, my grandson was watching a movie of one of these children's cartoon shows, and the ants are after a bit of cake. So the cat locks it up in the refrigerator. The ants form a chain around the handle, you know, the knob which you turn, and then they pull. Each ant pulls the next ant like a tug of war; and the other ants around the periphery of this knob, they are holding tight and, because they are holding tight, the knob turns, they open the door and they take away a whole cake. You see the strength of the ants, mere ants. It is only possible when a chain is formed, when all perform together their allotted tasks. Because like tug of war, if there are ten on this side and ten on this side and one boy fails on one side, he and everything is gone.

Therefore any sensible system, any system which sets out to do something really worthwhile in this world, any system which promises so much *must go to the weakest*. It is no use saying Sahaj Marg has no caste barriers, no profession barriers, no colour barriers. All that is blah, blah. It is like the ten richest nations sitting in conference in Rome and talking about how to improve the world. By the world they mean only themselves, their empires, their companies, their profits, their maximisation. So, the ten top millionaires of the world discussing the world are not really discussing the world. They are discussing their own profit, their own empires and how to enlarge these empires.

When we sit and discuss, it must be really the world; and unfortunately the world is eighty percent stupid, eighty percent ignorant, eighty percent miserable, poverty-ridden, sick. So every true Sahaj Marg abhyasi has to qualify himself or herself to play the part – at the same time in one individual – of a priest, of a confessor, of a father, of a mother, of a doctor, of a protector – everything. When an abhyasi needs you as a doctor you must be willing to apply balm on his soul, so to speak; give him peace, make him restful. It is not enough to say, "I will only give sittings. I am a prefect, I don't do anything else."

Even abhyasis have to learn to do it. The only thing they cannot do is to give sittings; everything else they can do. The only thing that a prefect can do which an abhyasi cannot do is give sittings; everything else he can also do. And the world is full of things that we have to do, which we can do, and which we *must* do. Because remember this fact, that wherever weakness exists… Textile people know this – a few weak fibres in the cloth and that cloth is sold as seconds at half the price. Why? Only two, three threads are broken – seconds.

You buy a basket in which two, three parts of the reeds are broken, it is a useless basket. You put one apple extra and the whole thing will collapse. Society is more fragile than these things. A little weakness anywhere in society, that society is eventually doomed to perish.

My cousin here is a ship's captain. One small leak in the ship is enough to sink the ship. "Oh, it's only a small leak. We can cross the Atlantic before it fills up with water." I remember reading a story when I was in school about a hole in the dikes of Holland.

A schoolboy was coming home and saw it and he put his finger into it. Because a hole in a dike does not remain the same size; as the water flows it becomes bigger and bigger. He had that sense, a schoolboy, and he stood there until help came. One little finger perhaps saved Holland.

We are all little fingers and we can all save this world, but none of us is willing to put our little finger where it matters. We are always trying to poke other people in the eyes with our fingers, punch holes in their hearts with our fingers. We are willing to use our fingers for destruction, not for construction, not to take remedial action, not to offer balm to others, not to bless but to destroy, to corrupt and to corrupt ourselves into the bargain.

So let us not make any mistake about understanding the true role of each individual human being. In this sense and in this sense alone, every human being can be like God. One little finger put into the hole of the universe, anywhere where it is leaking, can save this universe. If I say, "I am weak, what can I do?" – I perish with everybody else. If I put my little finger in that dike and save Holland, nobody is going to give me a medal. They'll say, "What did that boy do? He put a finger in the mud, for heaven's sake, and you want to give him a medal for this?" Doesn't matter – the reward is your existence.

If that boy had not put his finger in that hole in the dike, and if the waters of the seas had flooded this lowland, he would have died with everybody else. So survival is the reward for helping others to survive, nothing more. People expect to be rewarded for everything they do. The fact that you have been permitted to do something is itself a reward. Why should people trust us? Why should Master trust us? Why should God trust us?

That trust is the first reward. The ability given to us to work is the second reward. When we are successful in our work and we are able to sleep and say, "Yes, today I did my work," that is the third and final reward. No more rewards are offered; no more rewards are to be accepted; no more rewards can ever be given. We are not slaves working for a handful of rice. We are people marching on the way to divinisation. If at all there is any reward for us, it is in the aspect of our evolution where one day we can stand shoulder to shoulder with God and say, "Hi, here I am."

Thank you.

9

Message

Brothers and sisters,

Vanakkam.

Babuji's blessings to all. In our Tamil culture, we are used to celebrating festive days, auspicious days and holy days. In accordance with my Master's conviction, all days are festival days in spirituality. Likewise, we are accustomed to have working days and rest days. To those who are discharging their duties there cannot be any distinction between working days and rest days. From birth to death, knowingly or unknowingly, man is breathing. Similarly those who are rendering their duties are doing it from beginning to end.

So also, meditation cannot be a one-hour duty to those who have stepped into spirituality. Meditation is a single-minded duty to achieve the goal. Meditation should be a permanent feature in our cultural heritage. Those who do meditation, cleaning and

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Silver Jubilee Celebration, 11 April 1992, Madurai, India prayer in a segmented or fragmented manner may, by the grace of Babuji Maharaj, get some spiritual benefit. Though it may be so, I request you all to kindly compare and refer to your conscience as to whether the benefit can be full and complete.

In my opinion, conviction and experience, I see in crystal clear terms that there is a vast difference between mere blessings and achieving benefits by following a method, and that difference is bigger than that between the sky and the earth, greater than that between a big mountain and a small mound. We see this difference in each one's spiritual life. Many great people have offered their blessings; still even ordinary health or happiness is not found in human life. Let the genius brood on this.

Such of these concepts have been taught to me by my Master, Babuji Maharaj, the reality of which I have experienced and realised. On the authority I possess as a result of my spiritual experience, I wish to tell you all this.

To accept this high ideal, one has to make the meditation process offered by Sahaj Marg one's way of life. For those who are desirous of achieving the ultimate goal, and for those who wish to attain complete oneness with God on the lines lived and lead by Babuji Maharaj, mere meditation for an hour can never assure spiritual success. Therefore, I request all the brothers and sisters to accept Sahaj Marg as a way of life.

May the practice of Sahaj Marg be made as the way of life so as to have the loving blessings of Babuji Maharaj in full.

Vanakkam.

10

We Are Here to Serve

Dear brothers and sisters,

I have to speak in English so that I can muster my thoughts better. I am sure the local prefects will arrange a Tamil translation to be read by this evening's satsangh. We have been discussing about the progress of various centres of the Mission in India and abroad. We have found that there are centres which are growing by leaps and bounds whereas there are centres which have been stagnating.

This is a phenomenon all over the world; it is not only Madurai or Manapakkam or Tiruchi or whatever it is. Even in Europe, even in America, we have centres which are growing very well; we have centres which are not growing at all; we have centres which are sort of declining, contracting in membership like, for instance, Rajapalayam; stagnating centres like Madurai; somewhat causing concern centres like Tiruchi, just to speak of India.

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12 April 1992, Madurai, India

There is no use speaking about foreign centres here, and centres which are growing very well like, for instance, Ahmedabad, some centres in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi. The reason is always faulty leadership or lack of leadership.

My Master has said several times when we were discussing this phenomenon of problems in centres that, in his judgement, problems were there in all centres, or at least in most centres, where there was more than one prefect. He told me, "I made a mistake in making more than one prefect per centre. I have created this problem myself." I am quoting Babuji Maharaj. Of course, in the tradition of my Master I have been, in a sense, adding fuel to the fire by bringing in more centres with more prefects, so that sometimes I feel that I have created all the problems which are giving me sleepless nights and some of my bad health at least. It is not that a multiplicity of prefects are not working. They are working.

During meditation I had this remembrance of sitting and watching ants when I had nothing to do. (I have been often idle.) I once saw a hundred ants – tiny, what you call *pillayaar erumbu,* carrying a dead cockroach vertically up a wall, turning round a corner to take it up to a hole in the wall. For no reason, suddenly all of them will turn round and go this way. And I used to feel so irritated that I could have killed all the ants. I have even tried transmitting by thought – "For heaven's sake, turn round, you damn foolish ants! You are one inch away from your goal," and suddenly they are all going down. Then suddenly they have turned this way, then suddenly they have turned back this way, then they go this way – excruciating to watch, agonising. The journey they should have completed in probably three minutes, four minutes, ten minutes, it took them two hours, two and a half hours. Sometimes they didn't reach the goal at all.

It was an enormous feat that they attempted. A hundred *pillayaar* ants I don't think weigh even one gram, whereas the cockroach they were carrying was at least one to two grams. It is a feat beyond human imagination. It is a feat which cannot be attempted by human beings at all. We cannot carry another man vertically up a ladder unless we are specially trained. Rare is the individual who can carry two. Here are ants which are able to support the weight, a hundred times their weight, a thousand times their weight, and failing miserably because if they had had only two or three leader ants showing the way – "Follow me" – they would have reached the goal. Here we have this same phenomenon. Prefects who are sincere... I am not for the moment talking about prefects who are betraying their trust, betraying their faith, betraying their responsibility. There are some, unfortunately even in a spiritual organisation. What will be their destiny, what will be their fate, that is for my Master to judge.

My Master has said that there are one or two sins in Sahaj Marg. The greatest sin is ingratitude. The second greatest sin is betrayal of faith. Because after all, prefects have accepted their job by offering themselves for it. When you have offered your services voluntarily to work as a prefect and when you don't fulfil your promise to the Master to work according to his instructions under his direct authority, it is a betrayal of faith; it is a betrayal of the interests of the abhyasis – all for petty ego, egoistic satisfaction, leadership of a handful of abhyasis, misguided. I can understand at least if you all quarrelled to be the president of the Mission, you see – some fun! But you know this phenomenon of so-called dedicated, sincere prefects taking their abhyasis round and round in a *chakkar* [spin] like the cockroach phenomenon, I find this most disturbing.

Yesterday I had occasion to say in Tamil that people find my talks aggressive. I am not being aggressive; I am only stating facts. If I had been aggressive our prefect list would be considerably shorter – very considerably shorter, all over the world. There are non-performers, there are poor performers, there are bad performers, there are useless performers and unfortunately there are a few who are totally against the Mission, working against it from inside. Now that is despicable, lower than human and something about which we should ponder.

So, I am not being aggressive. I have an organisation to run, I have a Master to whom I am answerable. Whether you all think you have somebody to answer to or not, *I* am answerable. Prefects may not think they are answerable to their president, because there are prefects here who still differentiate between the president and the spiritual guide. For whatever reason, our Master has decided to, or thought it wise to, combine the two functions in one. I am not in a position to question his judgement. He is my Master; what he does is right, what he did is right, what he will do is always right for me.

I am reminded of the story of the *Sivakavi* which I saw long ago – Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, where as reward for his faith, his Lord comes to guide him through the forest, throws away the baby into the tank, takes away somebody's money – all sorts of funny things. Later on when he becomes a *jnaani* [one who has divine knowledge] he realises why the Lord did these things – why somebody's wealth had to be taken away; why somebody's wealth had to be given back; a child had to be destroyed; where no children were there, children had to be born. So, when we set ourselves up with our puny human intelligence, such as it is, to judge the Master's work, we should think twice. So coming back to this phenomenon of growing centres, non-growing centres, declining centres, the problem is always the same: either poor leadership, no leadership or deliberately illconceived, misconceived, wrong leadership. Now I am not prepared to go into the politics of each centre.

Perhaps you have all been expecting some sort of blessings from me, you see, but these *are* blessings. The true blessing is when you are given a second chance, a third chance, to correct your mistakes, to redeem yourselves in the eyes of your spiritual Master, to earn his blessings and to progress once again. There is no use in occupying petty positions in a petty organisation like Shri Ram Chandra Mission. There are bigger organisations, there is politics, there are religious trusts, there are temple trusts where perhaps you would be better rewarded. There is at least some money to rob; here we have nothing to rob.

So, contrary to my desire to give you all a very nice, gentle speech... It is my sincere desire that someday I should be able to stand up and say, "My beloved abhyasis, my beloved brothers and sisters, wonderful are all of you. May you be more wonderful. Wonderful are your prefects; they are dedicated to your service. Wonderful is this organisation; it is growing and growing in leaps and bounds." It is my heart's desire to be able to speak to you like that. But as I was telling Mr Palaniappan yesterday, if you want me to speak I must be allowed to speak what I have to say. Otherwise it is better I remain silent.

People ask me, "Why have you not come to South India for five years?" There are so many reasons, but one reason has always been in my mind – "What will I do there? What will I do in Madurai or in Tiruchi or in Rajapalayam or in Virudhunagar? When people don't listen, when people don't want to be advised, when people don't want to be guided, when people don't want to be changed, what will I do?" My coming here is useless if I cannot leave something behind me.

So I am put to this unfortunate necessity of having to decide in future whether I shall go anywhere at all or remain in my house and wait for all of you to come to me – or such of those who wish to come to me. I flatter myself, I continue perhaps to deceive myself, that there will be a few who will come to me out of all these thousands who pretend to be dedicated abhyasis, devoted abhyasis, devoted followers, sincere prefects. Perhaps I am being foolish, perhaps I am being optimistic, but I believe there may be a handful of people who will still come. Now whether it is better to deal with that handful of sincere, really sincere, heart-ful aspirants or to go around like my Master, dealing with the multitudes, hoping that somebody will change, something will change, someone will change, some place will change... You see it is a question of balancing between a certain change in a certain people. Certain means absolute *certainty* of change in a certain number of people, or in the possibility of random change here and there and everywhere else. That the Mission is growing is no doubt true. That it is growing in quality is questionable.

There have been visits by Babuji Maharaj himself to Madurai, to Virudhunagar, to Tiruchi, to Coimbatore, to Salem. Of course, I have visited Madurai sometimes twice a month, sometimes thrice a month for years. And yet, if this is the sort of result that we are going to get, where even today I am not certain of the loyalty of prefects, where there is bickering, mutual bickering between prefects; where there is lack of leadership because nobody wants anybody else to be a leader; everyone wants to be the leader – what are these centres coming to? – Where there are still divided loyalties between religion and spirituality, like one of our brothers, Mr Dawood, pointed out yesterday.

So you all have to do some heart-searching. I blame the leadership; much more I blame the followers (the abhyasis.) Where is your *arivu* [intelligence]? You see, this land of Tamil Nadu is supposed to be full of intelligent people. We pride ourselves on our intelligence. For centuries we have provided the clerks for British government. All the misguided legislation in the Centre and in the States is attributed mostly to Tamils – Tamilian officers sitting in Delhi ruining their country because their officer gives them a pat and says, "Swaminathan, or Ramanathan, or Raghunathan, why don't you change this law?" And for his bit of thirty pieces of silver, he betrays a nation.

We have the intellect, we have the intelligence – potent weapons. Some of us even have the courage to say that the president of the Mission is a fool, he lacks character. I have heard it said just behind my back when they don't know that I am there, that this fellow shouldn't have been chosen at all by Babuji Maharaj. I have heard it said about Babuji Maharaj when he was still alive, that this ill-educated, uneducated fellow, a villager lacking culture, lacking education, how is he qualified to lead a spiritual organisation? Perhaps people said that about Lalaji, too.

What we are inheriting is a tradition of abuse of personal intelligence, personal knowledge. We are using our intelligence, our intellect, to abuse our association with a spiritual organisation, with a Master of calibre, with the president of the Mission, with other prefects. In the process, remember, you are abusing yourselves. Because if there is justice in nature, if there is justice in God and if there is truth in the divine principle that everything comes back to one who gives it out, if there is truth in the occult principle that if you send out love, you get back love, if you send out hate you get back hate – if you believe in all these things, beware of talking at all. Beware more of talking nonsense; beware of telling lies; beware of misguiding people for petty interests. And let abhyasis too beware, because their spiritual destiny is at stake. You may win a victory over an opponent, you may win an argument, but let it not be said that you won a battle and lost the war. These victories of the egoistic personalities, they are temporary.

I used to argue when I was a secretary of the Mission, because that was my function. Now I don't argue, because I don't wish to win an argument. What is the use of winning an argument? Let the one who argues with me be the victor. May he be blessed in his victory! What have I to do with petty victories in argument, in disputation, in discussion? Many of my European associates here will agree that I don't argue any more, at least not much. It is a waste of time. If somebody says, "You are a fool," I say, "Yes." "How did you become the president?" "Ask my Master." "Are you a good president?" "I don't know. You have to judge."

So, if you want Madurai centre to grow, this is now a specific problem of Madurai. It is not enough to buy some land somewhere. *How much land does a man require?* – you must read that story by Tolstoy. Ultimately we are going to be buried or burnt on a piece of land six foot by three – no more. That is all the land that we *really* require. If this ashram is going to be for the aggrandisement of the few, to add to the prestige of the so-called leadership that is now supposed to exist here, may that ashram never come into existence. It is not a curse; it will be a blessing indirectly. But if the centre is going to behave itself, if the prefects are going to behave themselves, if they are going to be true spiritual leaders dedicated to the welfare, spiritual welfare, of the flock that is entrusted to them, may that ashram come up.

You know, I am always referring to a story about Lord Krishna who left his heavenly abode and was going to earth to inspect or meet his abhyasis, his devotees (his *bhaktas*). Narada came and wanted to accompany him; he said, "Yes, you come with me." His first visit was to one of the greatest emperors on earth. When he reached the palace he was stopped by the *dwaarapaalakas* [gate keepers]. He waited two hours in the sun. Eventually the emperor came. He greeted Krishna like a friend – very perfunctory, "Oh, you have come. You know, I was busy but I think I should take some time to greet you. What do you want?" The emperor is asking the Lord, "What do you want?"! So Krishna smiled and said, "No, no, I was just passing by. I thought I would pay my respects to you." The emperor said, "Okay, it is nice of you to have come. Fine," and he went back. And Lord Krishna made a thought: "May this emperor become even greater. May he achieve greater victories. May he have more and more lands under his dominion," et cetera, et cetera. Narada was of course able to read these thoughts of the Lord.

One by one, they went to devotees. In the evening, the final visit was to a cowherd who had one cow and a small thatched hut. His only food was the milk of this cow. He had just milked the cow for his evening sustenance and was holding it in a mud bowl. Lord Krishna came. He offered it with bhakti to the Lord. Lord Krishna drank it and made the thought: "May this cow die." Yes, Narada was nonplussed. He said, "What is this Lord of mine doing?" Very much like many of you question Babuji, "What has this fellow put before us? This old fellow who had no intelligence, no intellect, no knowledge of English, even less of Hindi – what has he done? – Parthasarathi standing before us." So, Narada was also questioning the Lord. And the Lord smiled. He said, "Narada, what is your confusion?" He said, "Lord, I don't understand you at all." "Narada, what is there so perplexing that you are so confused?" He said, "Lord, that emperor was disrespectful, perfunctory in his welcome, casual in his approach, didn't even treat you as a guest but as an unwelcome visitor, like a salesman at the door. Him you blessed with more dominion, more victories, more lands, more wives, more of everything. And to take the other extreme example, this poor fellow with one cow which is his sole sustenance and the milk of which you just drank, let me remind you, you have blessed him that the cow should die. What is this?"

So Krishna says, "Narada, you are a *trikaala jnaani* [knower of the past, present and future]. Can't you understand this?" He says, "Lord, I would like you to explain." He said, "That fellow, until he reaches the peak of his power on earth, he will not turn towards me. Between this cowherd and me, the only thing standing is his cow. Until that is gone, he will not turn towards me. You see, I am doing both for their benefit, because if they don't come to me, they will perish, eternally. So from one I have to take, to make him turn towards me. To the other I have to give, to make him turn towards me."

Whether the lord, my Master, is going to give you an ashram to bless you into greater growth, more sensible approaches to spirituality, more unity, more oneness, less of hypocrisy – less and less, so that in ten years shall we say, there is no hypocrisy at all – or whether he is going to take your ashram from you to confer the same blessing depends upon you. So let it not be thought that a handful of people can buy a piece of land and erect an ashram and become, shall we say, pseudo *zamindars* [land-holders]. Let this thought not prevail in anyone's mind: prefect, abhyasi, anybody. Let us remember that we are *trustees* – trustees of not merely property but trustees of souls entrusted to you.

Prefects, beware, because you are handling an enormous responsibility. Such of you who think you are not capable of handling it can always submit your resignation. Such of you who think you can handle it with faith, with integrity, with love, are free to approach me to be made into prefects. But beware! Beware of resigning from what you have got; beware of approaching me to get something which you don't have, which may be a blessing in disguise. Mostly abhyasis should beware because if they are abhyasis, they *too* are bound to follow the principles of the Mission. If they cannot follow these principles for any reason, whether it is a lack of will, lack of purpose, confusion between goals, it is better they should go into retreat for some time and then decide what they have to do. This is a serious conclave of people. We are not here for fun, we are not here to while away the time, we are not here to put on labels and badges. Every one of us here *should* be here for one single purpose – to reach the goal.

So may I remind you that Sahaj Marg *has* a goal – that of human perfection up to the highest possible limit. May I remind you that you are all under the understanding that you need a master to fulfil this purpose, and without his guidance you are lost. May I continue to remind you that prefects are made for your service. May I remind prefects – may I take the liberty of reminding them – that they have to dedicate themselves to this task with a whole heart, not bicker among themselves mutually as to who is more powerful, who is better, who is worse.

An instrument may be made of gold but it is useless if it cannot perform. Any farmer will tell you that an instrument made of gold is useless – you cannot dig one inch with it. You need steel. Gold is for collectors, gold is for palaces. We need steel in our ashrams. We need steely persons who can forget themselves in their responsibilities towards others. We need persons who are so dedicated to the Master that, in his remembrance, they don't exist any more except as instruments. If we are not going to perform all these things, not only are we condemned to lack of purpose, lack of achievement, but we are condemning others whom we are supposed to be serving. Let me therefore give you a final reminder that we are here to serve.

Thank you.

11

Awake, Arise

[...]

That sort of love is rampant; all over the world you find outlets for that: legitimate, illegitimate, healthy, sick, aged, with AIDS. Whichever way you look at it, it is there. But what we are talking about here is Self love, love of the Self – not narcissistic love of the external self, the egotistic self, but the love of the Self in me, my Lord, my Master. And automatically when you call Him my Lord, my Master – in Hinduism, this is the fundamental thought that the devotee is always a woman, whatever may be the sex, material sex, here.

So you see, here in India we have this tradition that I must fall in love with my Lord within, seek everything in life from Him, for He is my Lord and Master; what He cannot provide, none else can provide. This is implicit in the foundation of a family: what my husband cannot give me, where can I get it from? This is called *pativrata dharma* [conduct of

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19 April 1992, Ahmedabad, India

wife's chastity] in India, in Sanskrit, that you look to your husband alone for everything: for your food, for your succour, for your house, for your children, because dependence on the one you love is a *must,* as much in family life in India, as in spiritual life in India. That is why my Master said, Lalaji Maharaj said, the family life is the foundation for the spiritual life. Without a family existence, spirituality is almost, we should say, impossible, except for that stray case of one in a hundred thousand million people, perhaps once in ten centuries. So the family is a must, marriage is a must.

It is a funny thing, you see, that when love is revealed, spoken about, people weep. When lust is revealed, spoken about, enjoyed – there is shame, there is squalor, there is disease, there is sickness of the soul. So given the choice, which would a human being prefer? Which should he choose? Obvious!

Therefore, you see, all these things I lacked when I went on a long trip to Europe. No birds and beasts; therefore, no life. I cannot envisage a world where only human beings exist and can be happy. It is for me impossible to even dream of. It is like a single cell in my body saying, "I don't want company. To hell with this whole system, organisation system. Blast it! It is the creation of human intelligence. I don't like systems." You know, people in Europe say, "I don't like systems, I don't like discipline, I don't like order. Where is freedom?" Because in

Europe you have this rampant idea, a self-destroying idea that freedom means no discipline, no system, no order. On the contrary, freedom means system, order, discipline.

Every doctor knows this: when a single cell wants to rule by itself and multiplies unchecked and becomes a cancerous growth, that which is trying to live by itself is going to kill everything including itself. Therefore, the wisdom of the spiritual life is something of *enormous* significance; one has to go deeper and deeper into it. It is as I have said so often, like peeling an onion. You peel layer after layer of onion skin, and eventually you find nothing, but it is that 'nothing' for which we are striving all our lives.

My Master used to say, "People come to me for peace, but peace is nothing but the absence of peacelessness." There is no such thing as peace. Where there is non-peace, and it is removed, we think we are at peace. Similarly, there is no such thing as health. Health is a natural state, a living natural state, a harmonious state. Remove sickness and what remains we call health. But it is not really health – it is really nothing. It is a state in which a natural human being should exist. When he becomes diseased, he is sick. So it is not really a world of opposites: sickness and health, peace and non-peace, or peace and tranquillity and this and that. *We* have interposed the opposite meaning to another state of existence which we think is the opposite. It is not the opposite. It is *the* thing.

The opposite comes because *we* invite sickness. We invite mental despair, we invite obsessive tendencies, and then we say, please remove.

Philosophy says, "Arise, awake. You are sleeping, my dear friend. You are not alive. Who is sick? Who is poor?" You know, this is one funny thing in India: everybody is after money because they think that if they are not rich they are poor. Who said so? Why should a man be poor just because he is not rich? I am not rich, but I am not poor either. I am very happy with myself. This opposition of ideas makes us think that if we are not the one, we are the other, which is crazy. "If I am not virtuous, I am sinful." Who said so? "If I am not healthy, I am sick." Who said so? I am neither healthy nor sick, neither wise nor foolish, neither alive nor dead. In between, you see.

So, when I am in this condition of being in a state where you cannot say it is alive, where you cannot also say it is dead, that is the true state of being. In the body we are alive; at one moment we are dead, but there is something which exists beyond. Therefore I make a distinction between existence and living. The old formula of the Vedic philosophy says, *Sat, chit, anandam* (existence, consciousness and bliss) – not life, consciousness and bliss. The soul exists eternally because it was never created, it cannot be destroyed. Life, yes, it begins and ends; existence, never. Therefore, many avenues of thought open up when you go into your Self. Open up your heart because in the heart is written everything that God ever spoke (if He spoke), God ever 'thought' is the better word, God ever planned – everything is inside, you see, because in each one of us we carry an entire universe. But we have become conditioned to thinking that we are mere human beings – flippant, frolicsome, lustful, avaricious, grasping, and we suffer the sorrows of our own creations.

So this *uttishthata, jaagrata* [awake, arise], is a very real advice, is a very necessary advice. Wake up, my dear friend! Who do you think you are? What is the sin of which you are talking about? What is the virtue we are talking about? I don't know sin or virtue. God says, "What is sin?" It is like child of three asking, "What is sin? What is a lie?" and we explain to it and we teach it. We teach our children to be sinful, to tell lies and then punish them for it. And when we punish them they are hardened to that existence. But *we* make the first mistake by teaching the child what is a lie.

So I have often said that it is with adults that we have to start. It is probably why Babuji and Lalaji said that no children should be taken into Sahaj Marg; perhaps they don't need it. If the parents would leave them alone to grow up in a natural way, free of the negative influences from outside, they are perhaps already what they should be.

It is we who have to be trained; who have to regulate ourselves, who have to grow into the consciousness of the inner Self, the transcendental Self, the Ultimate supreme Self, after doing which we shall find that even with our children we behave differently. We behave differently with society, not as a conscious practice in good behaviour, but it becomes some sort of an existential change which John discovered whenever he met an abhyasi. It is funny that he came to his future wife last and said, "Are you an abhyasi, too?" And it is more funny that she did not tell him from the beginning, "They are abhyasis like me." See, this is the fear in society, that "if the one I love knows I am an abhyasi, he may cease to love me. I may lose him. He may never marry me." We are afraid. Husband afraid of wife, wife afraid of husband, parents afraid of children, children afraid of parents. What is there in this universe we are not afraid of?

"Why don't you come for meditation?" "Oh, my wife says, 'You are leaving me alone.'" Yes, but what happens when you go on a collection tour to Assam to collect forty-six lakhs owing to you? "Oh, but that is necessary." Aha! Forty-five lakhs to be collected in Assam over a period of twenty-nine days is a necessary absence and your wife reconciles herself to it, but a two-hour absence in satsangh, it blights her life! What a funny situation. And per contra, the toss of the coin and it comes down tails, and it is the same tail in the other way. "Why don't you come?" "My husband says he does not want to be alone. He loves me so much.

I must *always* be with him." What a parody of the marital life! What lies we tell to everyone, to each other!

So you see, let us stop telling lies to ourselves, to our spouses, to our children, to our Maker, to our *self* most of all, because every time you tell a lie, you are lying to yourself. When a cheat says, "I am good man," well, you can get away with it from the outer world but you are lying to yourself. It lays a burden of guilt upon you every time you repeat it. Then, either you improve on the whole thing and become harder and harder, or you become more and more susceptible to that guilt until one day it ends up in some disastrous sequence, you see.

My Master used to say, "Don't worry about telling lies to others. If they are foolish enough to be fooled, why not? But never tell a lie to yourself, because your Self knows everything." You cannot possibly cheat the Self because that old fellow, he is right inside you. He has got an inside view, as you say in America. What is this 'inside view'? It is there, he is there. He knows everything that is happening, and he says, "Aha! You are cheating everybody, but beware: I am here." And one day that 'I' [the Self] speaks up and this 'I' [the self] has to go down. And then there is this hiatus between the two selves, perhaps leading to schizophrenia, perhaps leading to so many other things, divided self, tortured selves. But if we should but think by way of honesty, introspection, looking into myself to see what 'I' really am, then we find all beauty, all glory there, you see; the divine symphony is playing there, the Ultimate is residing there, and my own conception or misconception of myself falls off. It is no longer relevant. It is nothing even to be thought about. Who am I in that Presence? It is like the stars. They are there in the sky but you cannot see a single one when the sun is up. Where are they?

This is the way of sublimating the self, transcending through the self and through that transcendence, coming into contact with the Ultimate and becoming *That*. This is our spiritual adventure, our spiritual life. In fact, this is the *only* thing with which we should be involved – eating and drinking and sleeping being but aids to this life, to keep us alive till this goal is achieved. Wishing for a long life is therefore a sin. What for – a long life? When I have finished my journey I should get out of the train or a plane. "No, no, let me sit longer in this plane. It is lovely, a Lufthansa or a Swissair jumbo – big top." It is not for me; it is only to carry me across. I have landed – out.

So, it is wisdom not to pray for a long life, because when you have not the wherewithal by means of intelligence, in the way of a goal to aspire to, long life is a curse. If you had the intelligence and the guide to guide you, and you have achieved that goal of life, it is an even bigger curse to continue in this existence. So, as the Bible says, "Gird up thy loins and walk."

Thank you.

THE PRINCIPLES OF SAHAJ MARG
VOLUME 15

"The way of Sahaj Marg is the way from the solid to the transcendental Nothingness, from the way of form to the formless, from the world of attributes to that of no attributes, from the world of qualities to that of no qualities, from the world of asking to, perhaps, a world where you may have to give."

— P. Rajagopalachari

The Principles of Sahaj Marg Volume 15 contains talks given by Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari in India during the period from January to April 1992.

These talks are a call for us to 'Awake, Arise' and develop a correct understanding of spirituality, and of Sahaj Marg as a way of life. They cover a broad range of subjects, including: how best to make use of the Sahaj Marg system; nobility of mind; family life; diving deep in spiritual pursuit; God; truthfulness; faith; opening the heart; becoming conduits of the Divine and fulfilling the Divine plan; service; and spirituality for future generations.

Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari was born in India in 1927, and is known to many as a truly universal human being, having transcended cultural and religious boundaries and providing guidance to students from all countries and backgrounds. He was raised in the rich spiritual heritage of East and extensively educated in the Western tradition. As the spiritual head and president of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission, he has travelled widely over the last thirty years, offering his services and spiritual guidance to seekers.

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